

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Madam Speaker, I was unable to be present on January 7, 2020 for Roll Call Vote 1. Had I been present, I would have answered Present on Roll Call Vote 1.

RECOGNIZING DAVID CONDON,
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF SPOKANE

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank Mayor David Condon, who will go down as Spokane's most significant mayor since Expo '74. Mayor Condon is a friend, my former district director and deputy chief of staff, a former U.S. Army Captain, and a visionary and compassionate leader who during his eight years of service to the City of Spokane showed that a good government doesn't have to be an expensive one.

When David earned the trust of Spokane's citizens and was elected as mayor, the crime in the city was high, development had slowed, and the river that runs through the heart of the city was becoming more polluted every day. David set out with a tremendous vision to reverse these trends, and lead a revitalization of the city that will continue to be realized and appreciated for decades to come.

During his time as the Mayor of Spokane—the largest city in my district—David was known for his focus on solutions to help the city grow and modernize for the future. He was instrumental in championing the revival of Spokane's Riverfront Park, cleaning up our river and restoring the lifeblood of Spokane. His efforts were recognized nationally, including by President Obama.

During his thoughtful tenure, Spokane thrived because David always worked to bring new and exciting businesses to our area and provide even more opportunities for people to build a better life. The city's median household income has increased by 37 percent since 2014, job growth is up 3.9 percent since 2015, and the crime rate is down. The future of Spokane's libraries is secured through David's leadership in passing a bond to remodel four existing libraries and build three more. David also championed rebuilding the city's aging infrastructure through smart investment and encouraging private partnerships. He hired more police officers, firefighters, and emergency responders and improved our emergency service response time to better protect and serve the city. Spokane, and all of Eastern Washington, is stronger today because of Mayor Condon's remarkable and visionary leadership.

He put Spokane on the map. We are no longer a medium-sized town in search of our identity, we are a national model and a shining example for other cities to follow. That is because of David's time, talent, sweat, and tears.

I'm proud to call David a friend and colleague. As he embarks on the next chapter, we will miss the leadership that he brought. On behalf of Washington's Fifth Congressional District, I thank Mayor Condon for his eight years of service and commitment to the City of Spokane. He left the city better off than he found it and truly made Spokane the "City of Choice."

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT TRUMP

HON. W. GREGORY STEUBE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

Mr. STEUBE. Madam Speaker, in light of how the House concluded 2019 with the passage of Articles of Impeachment, and the current state of the process, the constituents of Florida's 17th Congressional District and all Americans must be informed about the truth of this process as accurately conveyed in this letter from President Trump to Speaker PELOSI.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, December 17, 2019.

HON. NANCY PELOSI,
*Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: I write to express my strongest and most powerful protest against the partisan impeachment crusade being pursued by the Democrats in the House of Representatives. This impeachment represents an unprecedented and unconstitutional abuse of power by Democrat Lawmakers, unequaled in nearly two and a half centuries of American legislative history.

The Articles of Impeachment introduced by the House Judiciary Committee are not recognizable under any standard of Constitutional theory, interpretation, or jurisprudence. They include no crimes, no misdemeanors, and no offenses whatsoever. You have cheapened the importance of the very ugly word, impeachment!

By proceeding with your invalid impeachment, you are violating your oaths of office, you are breaking your allegiance to the Constitution, and you are declaring open war on American Democracy. You dare to invoke the Founding Fathers in pursuit of this election-nullification scheme—yet your spiteful actions display unfettered contempt for America's founding and your egregious conduct threatens to destroy that which our Founders pledged their very lives to build. Even worse than offending the Founding Fathers, you are offending Americans of faith by continually saying "I pray for the President," when you know this statement is not true, unless it is meant in a negative sense. It is a terrible thing you are doing, but you will have to live with it, not I!

Your first claim, "Abuse of Power," is a completely disingenuous, meritless, and baseless invention of your imagination. You know that I had a totally innocent conversation with the President of Ukraine. I then had a second conversation that has been misquoted, mischaracterized, and fraudulently misrepresented. Fortunately, there was a transcript of the conversation taken, and you know from the transcript (which was immediately made available) that the paragraph in question was perfect. I said to President Zelensky: "I would like you to do us a favor, though, because our country 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. Every time I talk with a foreign leader, I put America's interests first, just as I did with President Zelensky.

You are turning a policy disagreement between two branches of government into an impeachable offense—it is no more legitimate than the Executive Branch charging members of Congress with crimes for the lawful exercise of legislative power.

You know full well that Vice President Biden used his office and \$1 billion dollars of U.S. aid money to coerce Ukraine into firing the prosecutor who was digging into the company paying his son millions of dollars. You know this because Biden bragged about it on video. Biden openly stated: "I said, 'I'm telling you, you're not getting the billion dollars' . . . I looked at them and said: 'I'm leaving in six hours. If the prosecutor is not fired, you're not getting the money.' Well, son of a bitch. He got fired." Even Joe Biden admitted just days ago in an interview with NPR that it "looked bad." Now you are trying to impeach me by falsely accusing me of doing what Joe Biden has admitted he actually did.

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 "nobody pushed me." The Ukrainian Foreign Minister stated very clearly: "I have never seen a direct link between investigations and security assistance." He also said there was "No Pressure." Senator Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, a supporter of Ukraine who met privately with President Zelensky, has said: "At no time during this meeting . . . was there any mention by Zelensky or any Ukrainian that they were feeling pressure to do anything in return for the military aid." Many meetings have been held between representatives of Ukraine and our country. Never once did Ukraine complain about pressure being applied—not once! Ambassador Sandland 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."

The second claim, so-called "Obstruction of Congress," is preposterous and dangerous. House Democrats are trying to impeach the duly elected President of the United States for asserting Constitutionally based privileges that have been asserted on a bipartisan basis by administrations of both political parties throughout our Nation's history. Under that standard, every American president would have been impeached many times over. As liberal law professor Jonathan Turley warned when addressing Congressional Democrats: "I can't emphasize this enough . . . if you impeach a president, if you make a high crime and misdemeanor out of going to the courts, it is an abuse of power. It's your abuse of power. You're doing precisely what you're criticizing the President for doing."

Everyone, you included, knows what is really happening. Your chosen candidate lost the election in 2016, in an Electoral College landslide (306-227), and you and your party have never recovered from this defeat. You have developed a full-fledged case of what many in the media call Trump Derangement Syndrome and sadly, you will never get over it! You are unwilling and unable to accept the verdict issued at the ballot box during the great Election of 2016. So you have spent three straight years attempting to overturn the will of the American people and nullify their votes. You view democracy as your enemy!

Speaker Pelosi, you admitted just last week at a public forum that your party's impeachment effort has been going on for "two and a half years," long before you ever heard