

Remarks Prior to the House Judiciary Committee Vote on the First Article of Impeachment *December 11, 1998*

Good afternoon. As anyone close to me knows, for months I have been grappling with how best to reconcile myself to the American people, to acknowledge my own wrongdoing, and still to maintain my focus on the work of the Presidency.

Others are presenting my defense on the facts, the law, and the Constitution. Nothing I can say now can add to that. What I want the American people to know, what I want the Congress to know, is that I am profoundly sorry for all I have done wrong in words and deeds. I never should have misled the country, the Congress, my friends, or my family. Quite simply, I gave in to my shame.

I have been condemned by my accusers with harsh words. And while it's hard to hear yourself called deceitful and manipulative, I remember Ben Franklin's admonition that our critics are our friends, for they do show us our faults.

Mere words cannot fully express the profound remorse I feel for what our country is going through and for what members of both parties in Congress are now forced to deal with.

These past months have been a tortuous process of coming to terms with what I did. I understand that accountability demands consequences, and I'm prepared to accept them. Painful though the condemnation of the Congress would be, it would pale in comparison to the consequences of the pain I have caused my family. There is no greater agony.

Like anyone who honestly faces the shame of wrongful conduct, I would give anything to go back and undo what I did. But one of the painful truths I have to live with is the reality

that that is simply not possible. An old and dear friend of mine recently sent me the wisdom of a poet, who wrote:

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

So nothing, not piety, nor tears, nor wit, nor torment, can alter what I have done. I must make my peace with that. I must also be at peace with the fact that the public consequences of my actions are in the hands of the American people and their Representatives in the Congress. Should they determine that my errors of word and deed require their rebuke and censure, I am ready to accept that.

Meanwhile, I will continue to do all I can to reclaim the trust of the American people and to serve them well. We must all return to the work, the vital work, of strengthening our Nation for the new century. Our country has wonderful opportunities and daunting challenges ahead. I intend to seize those opportunities and meet those challenges with all the energy and ability and strength God has given me.

That is simply all I can do: the work of the American people.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. At approximately 4:25 p.m. the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives voted the first article of impeachment.

The President's Radio Address *December 12, 1998*

Good morning. This month, as Americans begin to prepare for winter, our Nation's farmers begin to prepare for the spring planting ahead. But this year has been very hard on farmers—for some, the hardest in nearly two

decades—and many are strained to the breaking point. Today I want to talk about what we're doing to help America's farmers weather these hard times and to build a stronger safety net to protect them for years to come.