

firsthand? He was not allowed to receive information about those telephone calls the President made to the leader of another country, so somebody violated the law by telling him. We don't know who that was. Whoever it was, Vindman or anybody else, there is a good chance they committed a crime.

That crime and all the surrounding information about their crime should be admissible in helping impeach and analyze that witness's testimony. You ought to be able to pursue it, but we are told, when Republicans were asking Colonel Vindman who he told about this, who did he transfer information to, they were shut down by the chairman.

That tells you the chairman must know what the answers were, and he didn't want the Republicans to have them. It sounds to me like there is a chance he committed a crime, and that was being covered up. Otherwise, if you want due process, if you want a fair process, if you want justice, then we have to hear the good, the bad, the ugly, so we can make a fair determination.

Every person elected as a Member of Congress is going to have a right to vote on that impeachment, if it ever comes up, and we have a right to hear the witnesses. Anything else is a sham.

By the way, this Colonel Vindman, it turns out, it has been published, he went to the stenographers. We had heard previously from the President there were four stenographers who take down everything.

Well, I have used court reporters my whole adult life, and they miss a word from time to time. I have had to fix transcripts where they have missed something. We have that problem here. They are amazing. These stenographers are absolutely incredible, but they miss a word from time to time.

But they have four. Apparently, we are told, the reason is that they don't want to tape it so that no foreign leader has to worry about ever hearing his own voice say things that he said in a private conversation with the President of the United States. So they have four stenographers so that they make sure they get exactly what was said.

And this guy Vindman goes to the stenographers and tells them: I want to get these words inserted in the transcript, Burisma—the name of the gas company they are trying to go after President Trump and say he demanded information on them.

Apparently, none of the stenographers heard that. It sounds like not only is he a potential criminal for leaking information to people who weren't supposed to get it, but there is also potential there that this is part—when you go to prove a conspiracy in Federal court, you have to prove not only that you plotted but that there was an overt act. His overt act of going to stenographers and trying to get words embedded into the transcript that the President didn't say could potentially be such an overt act in furtherance of the conspiracy.

□ 1345

There is a lot we don't know here, but this process has the possibility to bring this Nation's constitutional Republic to the brink of the end on our watch.

This ought to be a bipartisan thing. You can hate a President; you can disagree with him; but let's make sure that we have due process so we don't get drug into a third world status.

We know no country lasts forever, no country ever will. If we are going to perpetuate this any further, we have got to have some bipartisan concern for justice, for due process, for making sure that all of the protections to protect against a Star Chamber-type thing are not what we use here. Unfortunately, that is what we have been seeing for nearly 3 years.

One of the things I was taught in law school is what separates us is that we don't just take somebody and try to find a crime. That is unconstitutional. You have a crime that you find was committed, and then you try to find out who probably committed it. When you get probable cause, you can get them indicted, then you can have a trial.

What we have seen clearly is that, over 3 years ago, some people in Justice, FBI, Intelligence, maybe Defense, maybe somebody in the White House, decided: Here is Donald J. Trump. Let's find a crime, whether he committed it or not, that we can wrap around his throat.

That is what we have been watching happen. They found somebody. Now let's find a crime that we can allege.

The problem with this one about the quid pro quo, demanding something, they are going to have to prosecute Vice President Joe Biden. They are going to have to prosecute some U.S. Senators who have sent letters that have said: Gee, if you don't do this or that, we are going to cut off funding to you.

Whoa, Joe Biden bragged about it: I told him that, if you want this billion dollars, you better fire that prosecutor.

They are going to have to prosecute all of those people before they go after President Trump, and he didn't do anything nearly like he was accused of.

There is nothing wrong with a President saying to a foreign leader: Your country apparently was involved in a conspiracy to affect our election. Could you help us out by giving us information about what happened? We just need to know.

There is nothing wrong with it.

And you look at the transcript not amended by somebody who was trying to set up the President, but by four stenographers who were intent on having everything in there that was said, and you see there was nothing wrong with this phone call. What was wrong was the process of trying to commit a coup d'etat and take out a duly elected President.

It is time we wake up and we do what is right for this country.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

RISE AND MAKE TOMORROW BETTER THAN TODAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HILL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. HILL of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. HILL of California. Madam Speaker, this is the last speech that I will give from this floor as a Member of Congress. I wasn't ready for my time here to come to an end so soon. It is a reality I am still grappling with, and I will be for a long time to come.

I expected, or I at least hoped, to be here for as long as the voters of California's 25th District deemed me worthy of the honor of representing them. I thought I could make a difference here in making our community, our great country, and the world a better place for generations to come.

I, like so many of my colleagues, ran for office because I believed that our political system was broken, controlled by the powerful and the wealthy, ignoring and failing the regular people that it is supposed to serve. I came here to give a voice to the unheard in the halls of power.

I wanted to show young people, queer people, working people, and imperfect people that they belong here because this is the people's House. I fell short of that, and I am sorry.

To every young person who saw themselves and their dreams reflected in me, I am sorry.

To those who felt like I gave them hope in one of the darkest times in our Nation's history, I am sorry.

To my family, my friends, my staff, my colleagues, my mentors, and to everyone who has supported and believed in me, I am sorry.

To the thousands of people who spent hours knocking on doors in the hot summer Sun, who made countless phone calls, and who sacrificed more than I could ever know to give everything they could in every possible way so that I could be here, I am so, so sorry.

And to every little girl who looked up to me, I hope that one day you can forgive me.

The mistakes I made and the people I have hurt that led to this moment will haunt me for the rest of my life, and I have to come to terms with that.

Ever since those images first came out, I barely left my bed. I have ignored all the calls and the texts. I went

to the darkest places that a mind can go, and I have shed more tears than I thought were possible.

I have hidden from the world because I am terrified of facing the people that I let down. But I made it through because the people who loved me most dragged me back into the light and reminded me that I was stronger than that.

To those of you who were by my side in my worst moments—you know who you are—I love you. I am so grateful, and I will never forget.

And I am here today because so many of the people I let down—people close to me, supporters, colleagues, people I have never even met—told me to stand back up and that, despite all of my faults, they still believed in me and they were still counting on me. And I realized that hiding away and disappearing would be the one unforgivable sin.

I will never shirk my responsibility for this sudden ending to my time here, but I have to say more because this is bigger than me.

I am leaving now because of a double standard.

I am leaving because I no longer want to be used as a bargaining chip.

I am leaving because I didn't want to be peddled by papers and blogs and websites, used by shameless operatives for the dirtiest gutter politics that I have ever seen and the rightwing media to drive clicks and expand their audience by distributing intimate photos of me taken without my knowledge, let alone my consent, for the sexual entertainment of millions.

I am leaving because of a misogynistic culture that gleefully consumed my naked pictures, capitalized on my sexuality, and enabled my abusive ex to continue that abuse, this time with the entire country watching.

I am leaving because of the thousands of vile, threatening emails, calls, and texts that made me fear for my life and the lives of the people that I care about.

Today is the first time I have left my apartment since the photos taken without my consent were released, and I am scared.

I am leaving because, for the sake of my community, my staff, my family, and myself, I can't allow this to continue, because I have been told that people were angry when I stood strong after the first article was posted and that they had hundreds more photos and text messages that they would release bit by bit until they broke me down to nothing, while they used my faults and my past to distract from the things that matter most.

I am leaving because there is only one investigation that deserves the attention of this country, and that is the one that we voted on today.

Today, I ask you all to stand with me and commit to creating a future where this no longer happens to women and girls.

Yes, I am stepping down, but I refuse to let this experience scare off other

women who dare to take risks, who dare to step into this light, and who dare to be powerful.

It might feel like they have won in the short term, but they can't in the long term. We cannot let them.

The way to overcome this setback is for women to keep showing up, to keep running for office, and to keep stepping up as leaders; because the more we show up, the less power they have.

I am leaving, but we have men who have been credibly accused of intentional acts of sexual violence and remain in boardrooms, on the Supreme Court, in this very body, and, worst of all, in the Oval Office.

So, the fight goes on to create the change that every woman and girl in this country deserves. Here in the Halls of Congress, the fight will go on without me.

I trust so many of my colleagues to be strong on this front while I move on to one of the many other battlefields, because we have an entire culture that has to change, and we see it in stark clarity today:

The forces of revenge by a bitter, jealous man, cyber exploitation and sexual shaming that target our gender, and a large segment of society that fears and hates powerful women have combined to push a young woman out of power and say that she doesn't belong here; yet a man who brags about his sexual predation, who has had dozens of women come forward to accuse him of sexual assault, who pushes policies that are uniquely harmful to women, and who has filled the courts with judges who proudly rule to deprive women of the most fundamental right to control their own bodies sits in the highest office of the land.

And so today, as my last vote, I voted on impeachment proceedings, not just because of corruption, obstruction of justice, or gross misconduct, but because of the deepest abuse of power, including the abuse of power over women.

Today, as my final act, I voted to move forward with the impeachment of Donald Trump on behalf of the women of the United States of America. We will not stand down; we will not be broken; and we will not be silenced. We will rise, and we will make tomorrow better than today.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time for now, but not forever.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to be here on the floor of the House of Representatives this 502nd anniversary of Reformation Day.

Madam Speaker, prior to discussing immigration policy and the other issues of the day, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON).

Mr. ARRINGTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership on the Budget Committee, and I thank him for his patriotism, his love of this country, and for his desire to do what is right for our country, first and foremost.

Madam Speaker, today was a sad day, I believe, for our country. We have got, now, round two of this phony impeachment process.

It is purely political. It is not based in facts, not based in the pursuit of truth and justice. There is no openness; there is no fairness; and there is, really, no credibility.

The American people are not buying this bologna, not a single bit.

That is why we are seeing round two of putting lipstick on a pig, as we say in Texas. But, listen, the nature of this phony process is what it is, no matter how you dress it up.

It is sad because we are allowing this institution to be degraded. We are making a mockery out of this Chamber, the serious business of this country, and the serious nature of impeachment.

I would say, first and foremost, that the claim that this President has committed a high crime, treason, or impeachable offense is absurd, really.

From the outset, I would say that this is a baseless claim that only first-hand knowledge, the only primary source of evidence, is his conversation with President Zelensky. Unlike the cherry-picked leaks from Chairman SCHIFF, he let it be known what he said, what their conversation was about, in the full sunshine, for all the public to see.

And it was clear that the President not only didn't have a quid pro quo, the President not only didn't commit some impeachable offense, for heaven's sake, he was ensuring that taxpayer dollars, as the fiduciary, the chief fiduciary of this country, weren't going to be wasted or abused or misspent on anything except for what they were intended for and that every stone would be turned over to root out graft and corruption.

□ 1400

Now, that is not just appropriate; that is to be commended for any chief executive, especially for our President.

I think that this process is purely political and aimed, again, not at truth and justice, but at a distraction from what is not happening on trade, on prescription drugs, and a whole host of things that we have to address if we are going to have a real impact on our fellow countrymen and move this country forward.

I think it is a distraction from the socialist policies that have been advanced through this Chamber that have no chance of having any real effect on mainstream America.

I think, ultimately, it is to discredit this President; and instead of actually doing battle for hearts and minds the old-fashioned way in the public squares and at the ballot box, they are doing it