

Tran	Velázquez	Watson Coleman
Underwood	Walkinshaw	Whitesides
Vargas	Wasserman	Williams (GA)
Vasquez	Schultz	Wilson (FL)
Veasey	Waters	

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—4

Davidson	Kaptur	Subramanyam
Houlahan		

NOT VOTING—10

Beyer	Frankel, Lois	Sherrill
Casar	Gonzales, Tony	Womack
Cole	McGovern	
Fedorchak	Rulli	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1511

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO OFFER RESOLUTION RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 2(a)1 of rule IX, I rise to give notice of my intention to raise a question of the privileges of the House.

The form of the resolution is as follows:

Censuring and condemning Delegate STACEY PLASKETT and removing her from the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for conduct that reflects discreditably on the House of Representatives for colluding with convicted felony sex offender Jeffrey Epstein during a congressional hearing.

Whereas STACEY PLASKETT, the Delegate representing the United States Virgin Islands in the House of Representatives, inappropriately coordinated with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein in a congressional hearing in February 2019;

Whereas Delegate PLASKETT was actively coached by Epstein during the hearing, received instructions on specific lines of questioning, and was congratulated afterwards with the message "Good work";

Whereas Jeffrey Epstein was a known, convicted felony sex offender, having pled guilty and been convicted for procuring a child for prostitution and of soliciting a prostitute in a plea deal in 2008, and served a 13 month sentence;

Whereas in the course of that investigation, the FBI compiled reports on dozens of confirmed minors who credibly alleged sexual abuse by Epstein;

Whereas Epstein was under further Federal investigation beginning in November 2018, two months before Delegate PLASKETT's recently revealed text exchange during a congressional hearing, following investigative reporting by the Miami Herald detailing Epstein's controversial 2008 plea deal and highlighting accounts of his victims;

Whereas Epstein was arrested in July 2019 and charged with one count of sex trafficking of minors and one count of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of minors, and he was later found dead in the New York Metropolitan Correctional Center;

Whereas according to documents released from Epstein's estate, during a House Committee on Oversight and Reform hearing featuring testimony from Michael Cohen, disgraced former attorney to President Donald J. Trump, Delegate PLASKETT coordinated her line of questioning with Jeffrey Epstein in real-time over text message while the hearing was underway;

Whereas Delegate PLASKETT, who previously served as an assistant attorney general in the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Division, is known to have had extensive political, personal and professional connections with Epstein after his conviction as a sex offender up to the time of his arrest and then death in 2019;

Whereas Delegate PLASKETT's relationship with Epstein stands in stark contrast to the public image she has curated for herself as a defender of justice and accountability while secretly collaborating with an individual whose crimes against vulnerable women and children shocked the nation;

Whereas Delegate PLASKETT's willingness to receive instructions on official congressional proceedings from Epstein, a convicted felony sex offender with deeply concerning international associations, is especially alarming and inappropriate given her own past service in the U.S. Department of Justice and her current role on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and raises serious questions about Delegate PLASKETT's judgement, integrity, and fitness to serve; and

Whereas such associations erode public trust in Congress, particularly when they involve using input from a sex offender to advance partisan attacks during official proceedings: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

Section 1. Censure of Delegate STACEY PLASKETT.

The House of Representatives—

(1) censures and condemns Delegate STACEY PLASKETT for inappropriate coordination with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein during a Congressional Hearing, which reflects discreditably on the House of Representatives; and

(2) directs the Committee on Ethics to conduct a full investigation into the extent of PLASKETT's ties to Epstein and any potential further improprieties.

SEC. 2. Removal from House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

The following named Member be, and is hereby, removed from the following committee of the House of Representatives:

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Ms. PLASKETT.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will now recognize the gentleman

from South Carolina to offer the resolution just noticed.

Does the gentleman from South Carolina offer the resolution?

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I do.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read the resolution as follows:

H. RES. 888

Whereas Stacey Plaskett, the Delegate representing the United States Virgin Islands in the House of Representatives, inappropriately coordinated with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein in a congressional hearing in February 2019;

Whereas Delegate Plaskett was actively coached by Epstein during the hearing, received instructions on specific lines of questioning, and was congratulated afterwards with the message "Good work";

Whereas Jeffrey Epstein was a known, convicted felony sex offender, having pled guilty and been convicted for procuring a child for prostitution and of soliciting a prostitute in a plea deal in 2008, and served a 13 month sentence;

Whereas in the course of that investigation, the FBI compiled reports on dozens of confirmed minors who credibly alleged sexual abuse by Epstein;

Whereas Epstein was under further Federal investigation beginning in November 2018, two months before Delegate Plaskett's recently revealed text exchange during a congressional hearing, following investigative reporting by the Miami Herald detailing Epstein's controversial 2008 plea deal and highlighting accounts of his victims;

Whereas Epstein was arrested in July 2019 and charged with one count of sex trafficking of minors and one count of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of minors, and he was later found dead in the New York Metropolitan Correctional Center;

Whereas according to documents released from Epstein's estate, during a House Committee on Oversight and Reform hearing featuring testimony from Michael Cohen, disgraced former attorney to President Donald J. Trump, Delegate Plaskett coordinated her line of questioning with Jeffrey Epstein in real-time over text message while the hearing was underway;

Whereas Delegate Plaskett, who previously served as an assistant attorney general in the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Division, is known to have had extensive political, personal and professional connections with Epstein after his conviction as a sex offender up to the time of his arrest and then death in 2019;

Whereas Delegate Plaskett's relationship with Epstein stands in stark contrast to the public image she has curated for herself as a defender of justice and accountability while secretly collaborating with an individual whose crimes against vulnerable women and children shocked the nation;

Whereas Delegate Plaskett's willingness to receive instructions on official congressional proceedings from Epstein, a convicted felony sex offender with deeply concerning international associations, is especially alarming and inappropriate given her own past service in the U.S. Department of Justice and her current role on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and raises serious questions about Delegate Plaskett's judgement, integrity, and fitness to serve; and

Whereas such associations erode public trust in Congress, particularly when they involve using input from a sex offender to advance partisan attacks during official proceedings: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

SECTION 1. CENSURE OF DELEGATE STACEY PLASKETT.

The House of Representatives—

(1) censures and condemns Delegate Stacey Plaskett for inappropriate coordination with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein during a Congressional Hearing, which reflects discreditably on the House of Representatives; and

(2) directs the Committee on Ethics to conduct a full investigation into the extent of Plaskett's ties to Epstein and any potential further improprieties.

SEC. 2. REMOVAL FROM HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE.

The following named Member be, and is hereby, removed from the following committee of the House of Representatives:

PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE: Ms. Plaskett.

□ 1520

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The resolution qualifies.

MOTION TO REFER

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts moves to refer the resolution to the Committee on Ethics.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today, we have finally taken a vote that recognizes the need for the survivors and victims of Jeffrey Epstein to have justice and transparency. Not minutes later, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) is filing yet another partisan resolution.

I ask all of my colleagues to support this motion to refer this to the Ethics Committee.

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

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to refer.

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

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 213, nays 214, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 293]

YEAS—213

Adams	Bishop	Case
Aguilar	Bonamici	Casten
Amo	Boyle (PA)	Castor (FL)
Ansari	Brown	Castro (TX)
Auchincloss	Brownley	Cherfilus-
Balint	Budzinski	McCormick
Barragán	Bynum	Chu
Beatty	Carbajal	Cisneros
Bell	Carson	Clark (MA)
Bera	Carter (LA)	Clarke (NY)

Cleaver	Jeffries	Pocan	Joyce (PA)	Miller (IL)	Sessions
Clyburn	Johnson (GA)	Pou	Kean	Miller (OH)	Shreve
Cohen	Johnson (TX)	Pressley	Kelly (MS)	Miller (WV)	Simpson
Conaway	Joyce (OH)	Quigley	Kelly (PA)	Miller-Meeks	Smith (MO)
Correa	Kamlaager-Dove	Ramirez	Kennedy (UT)	Mills	Smith (NE)
Costa	Kaptur	Randall	Kiggans (VA)	Moolenaar	Smith (NJ)
Courtney	Keating	Raskin	Kiley (CA)	Moore (AL)	Smucker
Craig	Kelly (IL)	Riley (NY)	Kim	Moore (NC)	Spartz
Crockett	Kennedy (NY)	Rivas	Knott	Moore (UT)	Stauber
Crow	Khan	Ross	Kustoff	Moore (WV)	Stefanik
Cuellar	Krishnamoorthi	Ruiz	LaHood	Moran	Steil
Davids (KS)	Landsman	Ryan	LaLota	Murphy	Steube
Davis (IL)	Larsen (WA)	Salinas	LaMalfa	Nehls	Strong
Davis (NC)	Larson (CT)	Sánchez	Langworthy	Newhouse	Stutzman
Dean (PA)	Latimer	Scanlon	Latta	Norman	Taylor
DeGette	Lee (NV)	Schakowsky	Lawler	Nunn (IA)	Tenney
DeLauro	Lee (PA)	Schneider	Lee (FL)	Obernolte	Thompson (AK)
DeBene	Leger Fernandez	Scholten	Letlow	Ogles	Tiffany
Deluzio	Levin	Schrier	Loudermilk	Onder	Timmons
DeSaulnier	Liccardo	Scott (VA)	Lucas	Owens	Turner (OH)
Dexter	Lieu	Scott, David	Luna	Palmer	Valadao
Dingell	Lofgren	Sewell	Luttrell	Patronis	Van Drew
Doggett	Lynch	Sherman	Mace	Perry	Van Dyne
Elfreth	Magaziner	Simon	Mackenzie	Pfluger	Van Orden
Escobar	Mannion	Smith (WA)	Malliotakis	Reschenthaler	Wagner
Españolat	Matsui	Sorensen	Maloy	Rogers (AL)	Walberg
Evans (PA)	McBath	Soto	Mann	Rogers (KY)	Weber (TX)
Fields	McBride	Stansbury	Massie	Rose	Webster (FL)
Figures	McClain Delaney	Stanton	Mast	Rouzer	Westerman
Fletcher	McClellan	Stevens	McCaul	Roy	Wied
Foster	McCollum	Strickland	McClain	Rutherford	Williams (TX)
Foushee	McDonald Rivet	Subramanyam	McClintock	Salazar	Wilson (SC)
Frankel, Lois	McGarvey	Suozzi	McCormick	Scalise	Wittman
Friedman	McGovern	Swalwell	McDowell	Schmidt	Yakym
Frost	McIver	Sykes	McGuire	Schweikert	Zinke
Garamendi	Meeks	Takano	Messmer	Scott, Austin	
Garcia (CA)	Menendez	Thanedar	Meuser	Self	
Garcia (IL)	Meng	Thompson (CA)			
Garcia (TX)	Mfume	Thompson (MS)			
Gillen	Min	Titus	Beyer	Garbarino	Sherrill
Golden (ME)	Moore (WI)	Tlaib	Casar	Rulli	Womack
Goldman (NY)	Morelle	Tokuda			
Gomez	Morrison	Tonko			
Gonzalez, V.	Moskowitz	Torres (CA)			
Gooden	Moulton	Torres (NY)			
Goodlander	Mrvan	Trahan			
Gottheimer	Mullin	Tran			
Gray	Nadler	Underwood			
Green, Al (TX)	Neal	Vargas			
Grijalva	Neguse	Vasquez			
Harder (CA)	Norcross	Veasey			
Hayes	Ocasio-Cortez	Velazquez			
Himes	Olshewski	Vindman			
Horsford	Omar	Walkinshaw			
Houlahan	Pallone	Wasserman			
Hoyer	Panetta	Schultz			
Hoyle (OR)	Pappas	Waters			
Huffman	Pelosi	Watson Coleman			
Ivey	Perez	Whitesides			
Jackson (IL)	Peters	Williams (GA)			
Jacobs	Pettersen	Wilson (FL)			
Jayapal	Pingree				

NAYS—214

Aderholt	Clyde	Fulcher
Alford	Cole	Gill (TX)
Allen	Collins	Gimenez
Amodei (NV)	Comer	Goldman (TX)
Arrington	Crane	Gonzales, Tony
Babin	Crank	Gosar
Bacon	Crawford	Graves
Baird	Crenshaw	Greene (GA)
Balderson	Davidson	Griffith
Barr	De La Cruz	Grothman
Barrett	DesJarlais	Guest
Baumgartner	Diaz-Balart	Guthrie
Bean (FL)	Donalds	Hageman
Begich	Downing	Hamadeh (AZ)
Bentz	Dunn (FL)	Haridopolos
Bergman	Edwards	Harrigan
Bice	Ellzey	Harris (MD)
Biggs (AZ)	Emmer	Harris (NC)
Biggs (SC)	Estes	Harshbarger
Bilirakis	Evans (CO)	Hern (OK)
Boebert	Ezell	Higgins (LA)
Bost	Fallon	Hill (AR)
Brecheen	Fedorchak	Hinson
Bresnahan	Feenstra	Houchin
Buchanan	Fine	Hudson
Burchett	Finstad	Huizenga
Burlison	Fischbach	Hunt
Calvert	Fitzgerald	Hurd (CO)
Cammack	Fitzpatrick	Issa
Carey	Fleischmann	Jack
Carter (GA)	Flood	Jackson (TX)
Carter (TX)	Fong	James
Ciscomani	Fox	Johnson (LA)
Cline	Franklin, Scott	Johnson (SD)
Cloud	Fry	Jordan

NOT VOTING—6

□ 1531

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky changed his vote from “yea” to “nay.”

So the motion to refer was rejected. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent and unable to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted AYE on Roll Call No. 289, AYE on Roll Call No. 290, AYE on Roll Call No. 291, AYE on Roll Call No. 292, and NAY on Roll Call No. 293.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 2 of rule IX, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the House of Representatives has a responsibility and a duty to protect the integrity of this institution. What we learned from the documents released by Jeffrey Epstein's estate is nothing short of alarming.

Those documents show that Delegate STACEY PLASKETT, a sitting Member of Congress, coordinated her questioning during an official oversight hearing with a man who is a convicted sex offender, a man whose crimes against minors shocked this entire Nation.

Let me be clear: This was not just casual contact. There were deliberate communications, and they shaped her official line of questioning in a congressional hearing.

The American people expect honesty. The American people expect integrity

and judgment from their elected officials. They expect Members of Congress to conduct themselves with one word—decency—not to seek advice from a predator who exploited minor children.

This resolution does not accuse. It acknowledges what is documented. It censures Delegate PLASKETT for her conduct; removes her from the Intelligence Committee, where her judgment is paramount; and directs a full investigation into the extent of her relationship with Mr. Epstein.

Some will try to spin this as politics, but protecting the honor of this body is not partisan. It is not Democrat. It is not Republican. Standing against a convicted predator's influence in our proceedings is not partisan. It is basic decency.

We cannot pretend this didn't happen. The American people deserve better.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. We are here today on the floor to support the complete disclosure of information related to Jeffrey Epstein and his billion-dollar, international child sex-trafficking ring. Our side of the aisle, at least, supports the release of information relating to anybody who had anything to do with it, whether they are a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what have you, period. We insist on complete, full disclosure.

This resolution has nothing to do with that. This seems to me to be one more pathetic effort to distract and divert attention from the fact that the President's name appeared more than 1,000 times already in the small fraction of material released on Epstein and from the failure of the majority to move to disclose this information.

It is this bipartisan group that we have had behind the discharge resolution, which has insisted on bringing this to the floor, and we have gotten nothing but obstruction, opposition, resistance, evasion, distraction, and diversion from the other side, and now we get one more resolution like this.

The resolution actually proposes a disciplinary censure against Representative STACEY PLASKETT but, amazingly, alleges no misconduct. It does not allege a violation of the Constitution. It does not allege the violation of a Federal law or a State law or a local law. It does not even allege a violation of the ethics rules of the House of Representatives. Yet, they want to censure her and throw her off of her committee—this, a distinguished former Federal prosecutor, diligent public servant, and Representative of the people of the Virgin Islands.

Mr. Speaker, criminal justice has two parts to it. One is insisting upon legal accountability for people who do wrong. The other part of it is due process, which may be the two most beau-

tiful words in the English language, certainly the two most beautiful words in the Constitution of the United States. It is due process that protects all of our freedoms and our rights against the arbitrary power of government and the will to just punish somebody without any process at all.

That is exactly what is going on here. Think about it. Ghislaine Maxwell had due process. She had a right to counsel. She had a right to hearings. She had a right to hear the evidence against her. She had a right to put on her case. She had a right to cross-examine. She had a right to a neutral, impartial tribunal. She had a right to a unanimous verdict of a jury.

All of that she had, and she was found guilty. That is why she was sentenced to jail for 20 years, even though Donald Trump has transferred her from a real prison to a prison camp, where she has gotten very special, pampered treatment, like she is in a Trump hotel. She gets room service to her cell. She gets gym privileges that other inmates don't get. She gets to use the warden as a go-between with people outside of the institution.

Mr. Speaker, she had due process. Donald Trump had due process. He was convicted on 34 felonies, but he had the right to counsel. He had the presumption of innocence. He had a unanimous jury trial. They had a right to cross-examine everybody and put their own witnesses on.

Mr. Speaker, now they want to take a former United States prosecutor, the Representative of the people of the Virgin Islands, and without even going to the Ethics Committee, much less a court, they want to arraign her on some charges based on a newspaper article that she did something lawful. However ill-advised it may have been, she took a phone call from one of her constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think it is the position of the very distinguished gentleman that, if we find Jeffrey Epstein on the phone with Donald Trump, he should be impeached for it, or is that his position? Is his position that anytime Jeffrey Epstein got somebody on the phone—and he got a lot of people on the phone—that person is suddenly guilty? That sounds like guilt by association. That sounds like collective guilt.

Our minority whip introduced a perfectly reasonable amendment to say: Let's refer this to an Ethics Committee. Let's have a real hearing. They didn't want to have a real hearing. They want to rush to judgment. Why? It is so there can be some headline that will please Donald Trump tomorrow instead of a unanimous statement—or forgive me, I think the distinguished gentleman from Louisiana may have dissented, but an otherwise unanimous verdict of the House of Representatives that the American people want all the files open.

We have had enough of the coverup. We want all of the truth. We want the

survivors and the victims to have the possibility of accountability. Well, they want to give them another headline, which is that they have arraigned a Democratic Member for taking a phone call from her constituent, Jeffrey Epstein, in the middle of a hearing, and, of course, I don't think there is any rule here against taking phone calls in a hearing.

□ 1540

Now if you want to actually give her the chance to explain what happened, then we would take it to the Ethics Committee. I still don't see what the charge is. Where is the ethical transgression? Where is the legal transgression? Are you saying anybody on your side of the aisle who had a phone call with Jeffrey Epstein should be censured?

Be careful of your answer there because there is a lot more that is about to come out, right? You should think about what is the principle behind this rush to judgment.

Mr. Speaker, I will close just with this thought because I know there were a lot of people in the Chamber who were here when this happened and a lot who weren't.

There was a move to expel George Santos. He was a Republican Member of the House from New York. It was the same kind of rush to judgment, absolute political frenzy. I looked at it for about 60 seconds.

I was a professor of constitutional law, so call me a legal nerd, but I said, wait. This guy has not been convicted of anything. Well, he is a Republican. I know he is a Republican. He was not convicted in criminal court, to my knowledge. He had not been arraigned yet or convicted of anything in the Ethics disciplinary process. They just said, well, there is bad press. We want to get rid of him.

Beware of what you wish for. Is that the rule that you want here in the House of Representatives, that you can just draw up a Member of Congress in 24 hours or 48 hours because there is a bad newspaper article without asking any questions, without giving that person any due process at all? Is that what it has come to at this point?

All we are asking for in the Epstein files is, release the materials so we can check it out. They want to go ahead and censure and remove from a committee a distinguished Member of the House of Representatives with no due process at all.

Mr. Speaker, I reject this. I hope the whole body will reject this just like I voted and spoke against removing George Santos, a Republican on the other side of the aisle, because he had gotten no due process. I hope all our colleagues will reject this absurd rush to judgment in an attempt to change the subject.

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

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, before I yield time to my good friend from Louisiana, to Representative RASKIN, I will

be careful in my remarks. You need to be careful with your facts. You have an 11-year veteran of this body who should know better. You have an 11-year Member of this body who took money. It wasn't a newspaper article. It was a fact. She took money from Jeffrey Epstein.

It is ironic that you are taking up by defending Ms. PLASKETT, which is going to the Ethics Committee, but she has lost her willingness or lost her ability to serve because she got irrational judgment by taking money from a convicted pedophile of young children. It is unfathomable that you are taking the position that you are. These are facts.

You mentioned Ghislaine Maxwell. She is not a sitting Member of Congress.

She, as a sitting Member of Congress, has relinquished any sense of duty to serve on these committees.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members to avoid engaging in personalities and to direct all comments to the Chair.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) for yielding, and I thank my colleague Mr. RASKIN for the salient points that he has brought to this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I also defended George Santos on this floor and opposed the means by which he was expelled. I think it was beyond the pale. A responsibility that we bear in this body is to determine the means by which our colleagues shall be reprimanded or disciplined.

The Constitution is clear on this. My friend Mr. RASKIN knows full well that this body controls the means by which and the rules by which the Members of Congress shall be disciplined.

We have had variances of opinions regarding the exact disciplinary actions that should be embraced or rejected Member by Member. Let me say that, in this case, Ms. PLASKETT's receiving text messages—this was so alarming to me. When I saw this and read it, I didn't believe it. I say to my friend, I thought perhaps it was media from a satirical site. It couldn't possibly be true because we all know that a text message, a text exchange, is rather intimate in the realm of communications. To pierce into an actual congressional hearing, for a Member of Congress to receive and respond to a text message during a hearing, that is quite familiar, is it not?

This was shocking to me that a Member of Congress would be exchanging text messages directly with Jeffrey Epstein in 2019, at which time he was being prosecuted, federally, by the first Trump administration. He had received some nature of a sweetheart deal back in 2007 and avoided Federal prosecution by pleading no contest to some level of State prosecution where he was sen-

tenced, Mr. Speaker, to 13 months. My understanding is, he did 11 months and at the easiest time that could be done. He walked every day during the day on the work-release program.

That sweetheart deal, let me say, should be looked at. Now, to my horror, who has come to light that should be looked at, what was their involvement? Was there some involvement then? She is a good lady from the Virgin Islands. Where did Jeffrey Epstein live? In the Virgin Islands. He was a constituent in 2019. Was she a friend in 2007 during her service to the DOJ, which my friend has brought up? Was there any interactions?

These are the questions we have. The good lady from the Virgin Islands has crossed the threshold of reasonable suspicion and, therefore, she should be investigated by Ethics, by DOJ, and I would recommend by the Oversight and Judiciary Committees. Meanwhile, she should absolutely be removed from the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. This, Mr. Speaker, is my position. I present it without note for the betterment of the debate of this body.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to hear from my friend from Louisiana.

Both of the Republican speakers have said this demands an Ethics investigation. I think Mr. HIGGINS just said it should be investigated by Oversight and by Judiciary, as well as by Ethics and others.

This resolution censures her and punishes her before there has been one day of investigation. There has been no investigation at all. That was the whole burden of the minority whip's amendment. It was to say let's have an investigation, refer it to the Ethics Committee.

That is why the distinguished gentleman from Louisiana and I both voted against, and we got a majority to vote against censuring, or expelling even, George Santos without any ruling by our Ethics disciplinary body.

Isn't that putting the cart before the horse? I don't get it. I wish one of you could explain that to us why we should censure her before there has been one day of actual investigation. If being on the phone with one of our constituents, even an evil sinister force like Jeffrey Epstein—and, of course, he has said that he considered Donald Trump the most evil person he ever met, without a redeeming bone in his body.

I agree people can say different things, but Jeffrey Epstein, to me, disgraced himself. In any event, people want to know what were the contents of that conversation. Why was Ms. PLASKETT doing that? I am sure she has a good explanation. We are talking about a distinguished lawyer and Federal prosecutor who was in the middle of a hearing, which is something that Members do all the time is to talk to people in hearings about different things.

Let me ask, if it is now the standard that just to be on a phone call with

somebody establishes guilt by association, what about all of the Members of this body or of the U.S. Senate who were on the phone with January 6 insurrectionists and President Trump and his associates who were trying to block the certification of the election as people were chanting, "Hang Mike Pence." There were a lot of phone calls, a lot of traffic going on.

In fact, that is why our Republican colleagues dealt themselves a million-dollar cash payoff bonanza provision in the most recent Republican spending bill.

□ 1550

They put that in there because their phone records had been subpoenaed lawfully by a grand jury. They were treated like every other American citizen because their names came up as potentially being involved in that conspiracy to somehow shut down proceedings in the House and the Senate.

Now, are we saying just because they were on a phone call that they are guilty of something, that we should strip them of their committee assignments, that we should censure them? Have we gotten to that point? I mean, come on. This is the House of Representatives of the United States of America. Let's stick by the Constitution. Let's stick by due process. Let's go through the rules.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES).

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to speak today about Jeffrey Epstein or January 6. I am going to confine my remarks to two things that I know about.

I am going to take a deep breath right now because to stand here and have to listen to the gentleman from Louisiana, in the guise of just asking questions, besmirch one of the finest Members I have had the honor of serving with, I think, would offend the sensibility of anybody in this Chamber.

I am going to limit my remarks to two things I know very well: number one, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and what we need to do to preserve that very special environment; and, number two, the character of Delegate STACEY PLASKETT. On HPSCI, I have served for 10 years, and with Chairman TURNER and now with Chairman CRAWFORD, we have fought for that decade to keep the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence immunized from the sewage that flows through this Chamber, the partisan attacks, the hideousness. By and large, we have been pretty successful, with one exception, when that committee got involved in the political investigation around Ukraine in the first Trump administration.

Every single day, the leaders of that committee work hard, establish friendships, and do the work we need to do to make sure that the toxicity and the sewage that we are hearing right now

don't impinge the critical work of making sure that our intelligence communities are keeping Americans safe, not violating civil liberties, and not doing things inconsistent with the desires and character of the American people.

This effort put forward by a bunch of people who haven't served on that committee and who have no idea the comity and the grace with which that committee serves, you, sirs, will hurt this committee badly.

I expect every Republican on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence—and I will say it again—I expect every Republican on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence who knows Ms. PLASKETT and knows the committee to vote “no” on the idea that, without evidence and without due process, Ms. PLASKETT should be removed from that very special committee.

This resolution would strike a devastating blow to HPSCI's ability to work effectively. By removing a member in good standing based on a newspaper article about texts—no due process, no evidence, nothing offered other than a newspaper article which has moved the gentleman from South Carolina—a member who has consistently engaged in a bipartisan and productive way with the committee's work, to make some unrelated political statement will do profound damage to this essential committee.

Now, let me just talk for a moment about Ms. PLASKETT. I have served in this institution for 17 years, longer, I think, than most people in this Chamber. I have not had the honor of serving with somebody with the integrity, the commitment, and the hardworking bona fides as Ms. PLASKETT.

We can argue about the wisdom or the judgment associated with those texts. I am told that, apparently, Mr. Epstein was a constituent.

For any one of us, on our worst day, our biggest misjudgment is not to be judged without any due process, especially in the context of this superb Member, this critical, critical member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

The result of this resolution, if it were to pass, will be to undo the efforts of the Republican Speaker and the Republican chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Mr. CRAWFORD, to restore the committee to what it was intended to be.

While the bill for that decision won't come due immediately, it will come due over time in the form of a less accountable and less effective intelligence community with less effective oversight for Congress.

I don't expect the gentlemen who have offered this up to back down now, but I do expect every single member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, that elect, those few who understand what it is we need to do, to close the door on the flow of partisan sewage, which we see now threatening the critical work that we do.

Vote “no” on this appalling resolution.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire about how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from South Carolina has 22½ minutes left.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, let me just say for my good friends on the left, you know, we are hearing words. That is all this is, words. You are taking the side of a young lady who should have known better. She served for 11 years. She disparaged herself. She did it to herself.

This is not smoke and mirrors. These are actual texts that pretty well indict Ms. PLASKETT. Would she probably take it back? Yes, but it is too late now.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY), my good friend.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina. I thank him for bringing forward this important resolution before the body.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that I appreciate the gentleman from Maryland, his commentary about the vote on removal, and his considered judgment with respect to Santos. I agreed with him at the time and made the same points.

I want to align myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Louisiana, but I want to note in doing so—and I think the gentleman from Maryland has shown respect to, I think, the judgment of the gentleman from Louisiana about his being the sole vote on the issue before this body before with respect to what we are making public because of the gentleman's, I think, very real concerns about what it might mean for victims.

We had that debate and a colloquy back and forth in the Committee on the Judiciary a few hours ago, about what we can do to ensure victims are protected and so forth, as we all go forward on what I believe is a unanimous view that we should go seek out truth and justice here with respect to Epstein and anybody associated with him, and them, and the nefarious affairs involving Jeffrey Epstein.

The reason that I support this resolution is—and I would note that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle could have tabled this resolution. They chose not to table it. They chose to refer it, which would suggest to me that there is a recognition that something here is not particularly good; that we have a sitting Member, in this case, a Delegate from the U.S. Virgin Islands, who was sitting in the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform—and I actually have particular interest here because I was the one doing the questioning. Apparently my questioning was so riveting that she was engaging in text messages back and forth at that moment. While I was questioning Mr. Cohen, the gentleman was engaging in this back-and-

forth on text messages with Jeffrey Epstein.

Again, I have listened for months as my colleagues on the other side of the aisle disparage and try to impugn the character of the President of the United States and other members of the administration in connection to an investigation of Jeffrey Epstein, which the President's administration in 2019 indicted Epstein. They actually moved forward and federally indicted him in 2019. Ghislaine Maxwell was arrested by the Trump administration.

I know the gentleman from Maryland will go on to say that the Biden administration then carried forward that arrest, indictment, and prosecution. True, but it was, in fact, the Trump administration that did what had not been done for a long period of time by taking forward that indictment.

I have been listening to all the preaching by my friends on the other side of the aisle about how any association, anything to do with Jeffrey Epstein, is somehow the dispositive moment here in terms of determining the character of this administration or what they are doing or not doing when they are leaning in to try to seek the truth.

□ 1600

Tens of thousands of pages have been released by Jamie Comer, and 13 subpoenas have all been put out.

Now the House just voted to have greater transparency. Time will tell what that means in terms of what the court does and how they deal with the grand jury secrecy and what they do to continue to redact and protect victims' names under existing laws and how the courts treat that. That is going to be a process, as the gentleman likely knows. This is going to be determined as to what gets released and how.

Here we have the gentlewoman sitting in the Oversight Committee texting with a known convicted felon, a convicted pedophile, that was very public and known, had served jail time, and is engaging not just in texts that were trivial, but texts involving advice about her questioning of Michael Cohen, all designed to figure out how to get Michael Cohen to be able to somehow go after Trump or Trump's advisers or people around the President.

That, to me, is what we talk about with censure, which is contemplated, of course, in our rules and in the structure. The gentleman talked about the Constitution. We are not removing her. We are simply saying censure. We are saying it is censurable conduct to say that this individual sitting on a committee taking advice from a known convicted pedophile, convicted felon, that that is conduct unbecoming of a Member of the United States Congress, engaging in real time, taking advice from someone that we have been listening to—being lectured to as someone deserving of all of the scorn of the entire world. He is. That is why we are here.

If my colleagues didn't think this was a concern, they would have simply made a motion to table, but my colleagues decided to refer it to committee because they know this is a problem. They know this is not the kind of conduct you want in a Member of this body.

I think that the gentleman from South Carolina is right to have brought this forward. I think that the body should hear this debate and that we should vote tonight to censure and refer to the Ethics Committee for further consideration.

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

I thank my friend from Texas for those remarks. I am afraid all of them dance around the central issue, which is the good Congressman knows how due process works in America. There are facts that are adduced first. There is an opportunity to be heard on both sides. There is due process. There is consideration. Then there is judgment.

The gentleman has flipped the whole thing on its head. He has said we are going to judge her guilty before anybody has an opportunity even to hear what the charges are, much less answer the charges, much less do any kind of analysis.

I am sorry to hear that the text exchange that seems to be at the heart of people's consternation here took place during the distinguished gentleman's questioning, but that is not a Federal offense nor is it an ethical violation in the House of Representatives. You don't get to have the undivided attention of all of your colleagues.

The gentleman says that he thinks that our position is that any association with Jeffrey Epstein is a dispositive moment of judgment for people. That is not the position we have advanced.

We have taken the position with the survivors that we want to end the coverup of what happened and then let the chips fall where they may. If there are people who were actually engaged in crime, as Ghislaine Maxwell was, as Epstein was, then they should be charged with every element of due process.

If they happen to be a waiter or a waitress who worked at an event, they are not guilty of anything. That is what due process is, we are able to sift through and figure it out.

However, your rush to judgment isn't even giving anybody a chance to know what the charges are here. It is the most extraordinary thing I have ever seen.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. CROCKETT).

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Speaker, this is a distraction to take away from the fact that the guardians of pedophiles is literally trying to protect pedophiles. The President is a convicted felon and an accused sex offender.

STACEY PLASKETT hasn't been accused of either.

What are we actually here talking about? Trump and Epstein were besties. We have all seen the pictures of them. We saw the birthday book. So why are y'all more interested in talking about STACEY PLASKETT than Trump's relationship with the man?

When did y'all become so moral? I can remember when y'all wouldn't sign the discharge petition. All of a sudden, everybody wanted to vote for this, but you wouldn't sign the discharge petition.

Until we decide that we are going to go after the actual rapists and pedophiles, miss me with your moral high ground.

Folks who also took money from somebody named Jeffrey Epstein, as I had my team dig in very quickly: Mitt Romney, the NRCC, Lee Zeldin, George Bush, WinRed, McCain-Palin, Rick Lazio.

I just want to be clear: If this is the standard that we are going to make, just know we are going to expose it all, and just know that the FEC filings are available for everybody to review.

This is absolutely ridiculous. You decide that you want to punish a sitting Member of Congress because you are concerned about her text messages. Well, maybe you should be more concerned about those sex tapes that we still haven't gotten access to. Maybe you should be more concerned with the fact that the President's name is mentioned in the files way more than STACEY PLASKETT's name.

Listen, I am not saying that anything is right or wrong. But if you are trying to figure out what is going on with somebody that is a criminal, then maybe you need to talk to their associates. That is exactly why maybe she was getting text messages. I am not saying she was or wasn't, but considering the fact that they were talking to another associate of the President's, and maybe she needed intel, you would have to go talk to somebody who maybe knows what he is up to.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MEUSER). The gentleman from South Carolina has 17 minutes remaining.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS).

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. NORMAN for raising this issue.

To me, this is an interesting issue because I am hearing the argument that is coming at us, and it says, well, there is no due process.

Well, debate is a part of due process. A part of due process is to have this debate. You get to stand up and defend, and you get to raise your issues. The Democrats chose to take it back to committee, which as Mr. ROY said, that kind of indicates that maybe you know that there is something that is not great about this.

I am looking at this, and here is at least one of the exchanges that seems

to have taken place. Maybe we will hear some comment about it. That would be good. They can make some comment about it.

In this exchange, Mr. Epstein sent a text message to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands. This is the quote: He brings up Rhona, keeper of the secrets.

Who is he referring to? Rhona Graff. That is a Trump assistant.

Plaskett responds: Rhona? Quick, I am up next. Is that an acronym?

She wants to know what Mr. Epstein wants her to talk about. Don't you find that interesting? I find that really intriguing, especially since we know what Mr. Epstein was.

Mr. Epstein responds: That is his assistant.

He doesn't really say much more than that.

Then Plaskett starts questioning Mr. Cohen and asks about Graff. Not only was she texting, having this communication with Mr. Epstein, she is asking Mr. Cohen what Mr. Epstein wants her to ask.

Another text from Epstein says: Good work.

That is after she wraps it up.

All of this seems to be very interesting. I am sorry that I don't breathe the rarefied air of the Intelligence Committee. I don't. I am just a regular guy and a Member of the House, that is all, so I don't know about that rarefied air.

I guess I am part of the sewage that Mr. HIMES said. Yeah. Thanks for agreeing with me, Ms. PLASKETT. She has got us down. Unless you are in the Intelligence Committee, you are crap. That is what the Intel Committee says.

But here is the deal: When you are sitting there in a sitting committee, and you are having communications with a convicted sex offender, and you are taking their advice on how to ask questions, maybe you have a problem. Maybe your problem is that you brought disrepute on the House.

This isn't from the articles. This is from the 10,000 pages or so released last week from the Oversight Committee that they received from the Epstein estate. This isn't fishing around. This is coming from real evidence.

□ 1610

Mr. Speaker, I sit here, and I listen: Oh, she is the finest Member that ever walked the planet.

That is what we heard. The bottom line is she is sitting there, seeking advice and counsel on how to ask questions from Jeffrey Epstein, who this entire body, save one, just condemned. We want all of the evidence. It is a shame to be here but for one thing, which is: She made the choice.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone in this body to support Mr. NORMAN's resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their comments to the Chair.

Before I recognize the gentleman from Maryland, please remind yourself,

as well as the Members, to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to remark that yet one more Member says we should go ahead and censure her and we then should do a complete investigation. I think any fifth grader in America knows that is the exact opposite of what due process means in America. We don't punish people before we have an investigation and an opportunity to be heard.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT).

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. RASKIN, my former professor in law school.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the body. I first want to give my colleagues a sense of what was happening that day. Everyone knows at that hearing in February the entire country was watching as Michael Cohen decided he was going to finally give up information about what was happening in the Trump world, the Trump enterprise.

At the beginning of that hearing, Ranking Member JIM JORDAN disrespected Elijah Cummings—may he rest in peace and his name be a memory—after not allowing Mr. JORDAN to shut the committee hearing down.

I turned to Mr. JORDAN and told him to have respect for the chair and to basically shut up. That moment went viral. I began to get innumerable texts from friends, from foes, and from constituents about what was happening in that hearing.

Mr. Speaker, I got a text from Jeffrey Epstein who at the time was my constituent, who it was not public knowledge at that time he was under Federal investigation, and who was sharing information with me.

Mr. Speaker, I heard recently from someone that I was seeking advice from him. Let me say something. I don't need to get advice from any individual on how to question anybody. I have been a lawyer for 30 years. I have been a narcotics prosecutor in New York City. I have had the honor of being a political appointee at the Justice Department after September 11, as a Republican appointee in the Bush administration.

I know how to question individuals. I know how to seek information. I have sought information from confidential informants, from murderers, and from other individuals because I want the truth and not because I need them to tell me what to say.

If my colleagues look at the transcript, they will see that I questioned Michael Cohen for 5 minutes. The Washington Post only shows you 30 seconds and took from it one individual's name that I got from Jeffrey Epstein and didn't know who the individual was. I put that individual with a host of other individuals that I felt the committee should subpoena. They have

never been subpoenaed. They have never been questioned.

At the end of the day, I know that in the Trump administration, and with my colleagues over there, it is not about sexual assault. It is not about support of victims. It is about money.

Mr. Speaker, I have consistently stood against sexual violence and the exploitation of women and children in previous years, as well as here in this body. We all know that Jeffrey Epstein's actions were absolutely reprehensible.

As a constituent, as an individual who gave donations to me, when I learned of the extent of his actions after his investigation, I gave that money to women's organizations in my community. I didn't give it back to him but to women in the community who needed that support. That is what I think should have been done, and that is what I did.

Mr. Speaker, they have taken a text exchange, which shows no participation, no assistance, no involvement in any illegal activity, and weaponized it for political theater. That is what this is.

This has been reviewed by Federal courts. Victims who initially brought charges and a case against me dismissed it on their own without prejudice.

My colleagues don't want to talk about what is really happening here. They don't want to discuss their attacks on working families and their protection of powerful predators and corporate criminals. If my colleagues want to talk about texting and texting felons, how often do my colleagues text Donald J. Trump? That is the individual we should be concerned about.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. CLYDE. Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, let me say this. I am not going to support the wealthy and connected who continue to exploit workers and evade taxes, powerful figures with credible allegations who face no consequences, and corporate interests profiting from human suffering, while families struggle.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell the people of the Virgin Islands—

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. CLYDE. Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

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

Mr. CLYDE. Mr. Speaker, the point of order is you may not call the President of the United States a felon. That is a violation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The point of order is under consideration, and we are not going to lose order here either.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, may I continue?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain, as mentioned a little while ago, from making personality commentary toward the President.

The point of order is not timely.

The gentlewoman is recognized.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I feel sorry for my colleagues and for what is happening here. I feel sorry for this body. I see Members coming in and speaking against me, and I have never even had a conversation with them. They don't know me. They don't know the work that I have done. They don't know the support that I have given to families and to individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I worked a full-time job with children under the age of 5 while going to law school at night. Do my colleagues think I would risk my law degree for any individual, never mind a reprehensible individual like Jeffrey Epstein? I would not. What I am about is the truth.

Let me tell the people of the Virgin Islands. This attempt at intimidation will pass. We in the Virgin Islands do not back down from a fight. That is how we won our freedom, and that is how we will continue to grow our equality.

If my colleagues censure me or take away a committee, I will still do the work. I am here to support people and to support this great Constitution, which I have sworn numerous times to uphold.

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

Mr. Speaker, before I recognize Mr. CLYDE, let me just say I don't know Ms. PLASKETT. My overall impression of her has been good. She gives these words about protecting families and children. Where is that demonstrated when she took money from a convicted pedophile that had served time? Where was that?

The words are beyond believability. I think she is a nice person, but she missed the boat. She lost her—I don't know the word to describe it. For what she has done, she deserves to come off of the committees.

□ 1620

Let me remind you, we want to go to the Ethics Committee. To those listening, the Ethics Committee is five Democrats and five Republicans. Let them find it, but in the meantime, you do not deserve to serve on a committee, a national committee.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members will be reminded, again, to direct their comments to the Chair.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from South Carolina has 11½ minutes remaining.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CLYDE).

Mr. CLYDE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, Mr. NORMAN from South Carolina, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution censuring and condemning Delegate STACEY PLASKETT from the U.S. Virgin Islands for inappropriate coordination with convicted

sex offender Jeffrey Epstein during a congressional hearing and removing Delegate PLASKETT from the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and referring her to the Ethics Committee for further investigation.

After 4 years of silence on this matter, there was not a peep during the entire Biden Administration. Let me repeat that. After 4 years of silence on this matter about Jeffrey Epstein, House Democrats are now demanding transparency and accountability surrounding Jeffrey Epstein and his associates.

While their fake outrage is clearly just another disgusting attempt to smear President Trump, House Republicans are taking this matter seriously and are working toward delivering the much-needed transparency and accountability that the American people deserve.

This resolution is accountability page 1. During the House Oversight Committee's ongoing investigation into Jeffrey Epstein, emails obtained by a congressional subpoena—that is right, it was a congressional subpoena—by the House Oversight Committee, not the discharge petition that just got voted on, but this is the Oversight Committee's congressional subpoena—has brought to light that in 2019, Delegate STACEY PLASKETT coordinated her line of questioning with Jeffrey Epstein in real time over text messages during an Oversight Committee hearing featuring testimony from Michael Cohen.

Now, who is Michael Cohen?

Michael Cohen was the disgraced former attorney of President Donald Trump.

She was asking input from Jeffrey Epstein on how to best question Cohen, and Cohen was himself at that time a convicted felon from 2018.

So now that Republicans are exposing Democrat ties to Jeffrey Epstein and his vile crimes, the other side of the aisle has flipped. They apparently no longer want transparency or accountability.

Why?

It is because they don't want the truth. They want to weaponize a serious matter into a distraction all in an attempt to take down President Trump and to hurt his administration and what he is doing to Make America Great Again.

The actions taken by Delegate PLASKETT reflect poorly on the House, and this body needs to hold her accountable.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote to adopt this resolution to show the American people that those who colluded with Mr. Epstein, including Members of the House, will be held accountable, and this resolution is the beginning of that.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES).

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman, my good

friend from the great State of Maryland, the ranking Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition.

This resolution, this effort to censure Delegate PLASKETT and to rip away her membership on the Intel Committee, is nothing more than a political stunt by a desperate, failed candidate for Governor trying to pander to the people back in South Carolina. It is nothing more than that.

You want to make the statement about who has brought disgrace to the House. The actions of this House Republican majority have brought disgrace to the House of Representatives from day one of this Presidency.

The reality is, if you want to talk about fealty to the Constitution and things of that nature, the House is a separate and coequal branch of government. You don't seem to understand that.

You have functioned from the very beginning of your so-called majority, Mr. Speaker, not as a check and balance on an out-of-control administration, but as a reckless rubber stamp for Donald Trump's extreme agenda, and you are failing the American people.

You failed to keep your core promise. Your core promise to the American people was that you were going to lower costs on day one. Costs haven't gone down here in the United States of America. Costs have gone up.

The Trump economy is a complete and total failure. It is a disaster. The American people are hurting, and so every week, you come to the House floor now that you have returned from your 7-week, taxpayer-funded vacation and come up with another stunt to try to distract the American people. Or perhaps you were ordered by your puppet master, Donald Trump, who wants to distract the American people today.

That is because his effort to suppress the Jeffrey Epstein files has failed spectacularly.

We believe in transparency, we believe in accountability, and we believe in due process. That is the opposite of what is happening on the floor today.

Let me be very clear about STACEY PLASKETT. She is a woman of great intelligence and a woman of great integrity, and she deserves better than what she is receiving from House Republican extremists. She deserves the opportunity to be heard. She deserves due process. She deserves the ability to make her case, not to be prosecuted by pettifoggers playing lawyer on the floor of the House of Representatives. Google that if you don't know what it means.

The so-called Freedom Caucus wants to lecture us about proceeding at this moment.

The actions that you continue to engage in will have consequences: consequences today, consequences tomorrow, consequences next week, consequences next year, and certainly consequences when the American people

throw this House Republican majority out in the aftermath of the election next November. Be very careful about the extreme actions that you continue to engage in.

Now, it is extraordinary to me week after week, censure after censure, and I wonder: Is it just coincidence that the last three censures we have had on the House floor happened to involve—first you tried to censure LAMONICA McIVER, and then, Mr. Speaker, Republicans tried to censure ILHAN OMAR. Now we are on the floor, and you are trying to censure STACEY PLASKETT.

What is it exactly that those three individuals have in common?

House Republicans are going to have to answer for the extreme things that you continue to do.

The American people know this is a phony majority. It is a fake majority. It is not a real majority.

Republicans aren't doing anything to make life better for the American people, and that is why we are on the floor right now. There is nothing that House Republicans can do to disgrace STACEY PLASKETT because House Republicans continue to disgrace themselves. So whatever happens later on this evening, the American people will hear from Delegate PLASKETT beyond this making her case. The people of the Virgin Islands, I am confident, will continue to stand behind her.

We will never be lectured on issues related to accountability, transparency, principle, and ethics from this group of extreme House Republicans who continue to visit a national nightmare on the American people, bending the knee to a wannabe king and doing real harm in real time. At the end of the day, your time is coming as well.

□ 1630

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from South Carolina has 3½ minutes remaining.

All Members are again reminded, including the minority leader, to direct their comments to the Chair.

All Members are again instructed, including the minority leader, to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

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

I find it interesting that the minority leader mentioned that we aren't really a majority. I will tell you, 77 million people are a majority. They rendered the consequences to elect the President that has revived this country from a disaster, 4 years under the Biden administration.

Let's go back into a little bit of history here about the hearing. The messages show that PLASKETT texted Epstein before the hearing that started that day, at 7:55. She texted him, the sex offender, the predator on the children she says she protects. They had comments like he told Ms. PLASKETT to

talk about his grades. He mentioned that she had a great-looking outfit. This is from Mr. Epstein.

At 10:40, a broadcast feed cut to Ms. PLASKETT, showing her moving her mouth as if she was chewing something.

Ms. PLASKETT mentioned that she had multiple, multiple texts. According to the records—and I don't know how many of her texts came from those convicted of felonies, but at 2:25, minutes before PLASKETT began questioning Cohen at 2:28, Epstein messaged back "Good work" at 2:34, 1 minute after PLASKETT finished her questioning of Cohen. So the whole 5 minutes was pretty much conducted under the direction of a convicted pedophile.

Ms. PLASKETT was reached by phone Thursday. PLASKETT declined to answer questions about the text messages and directed all inquiries to her congressional staff. PLASKETT's chief of staff said Thursday she was "not in a position to confirm or not" whether the Congresswoman was texting with Mr. Epstein at the hearing. She did not respond to follow-up questions.

Bottom line, these are facts. These are text messages. This wasn't smoke and mirrors, so it is interesting that they are taking that tact.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from South Carolina has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE).

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, the conscience of the Congress, in strong opposition to this resolution. This resolution is a blatantly partisan, shameless attack.

As we sit here today, Donald Trump is still the single person in this country with the authority and the ability to deliver justice to survivors and truth to the American people by just releasing the files. So instead of answering why Donald Trump chooses every single day not to release the Epstein files, they are pointing fingers at this side of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the President, Congresswoman STACEY PLASKETT has committed no crime, violated no rule, and broken no promises.

There has been no investigation, no due process, no inquiry into whether the Congresswoman had any connection whatsoever to Epstein's despicable and disgusting criminal conduct.

This resolution would have us remove a capable and hardworking member of one of the most serious working committees in this body on the basis of a conversation from more than 6 years ago, which broke no rules, broke no laws, and has no connection to any criminal activity.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this partisan resolution, this sham.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I want to start by addressing the young people who appear to be in the audience this evening because I am afraid some of my arguments are lost on some of our colleagues across the aisle suffering from Trump derangement syndrome. It seems to have completely warped their minds today, and they are not thinking clearly about the Constitution or the rule of law.

The young people here will recognize, if they read this resolution, immediately what is wrong with it because it is replete with phrases like this, that this one incident that they are referring to raises serious questions about the judgment and the integrity and the fitness to serve. Well, I think that is absurd, but in any event, if you think it raises serious questions, presumably you would want the answers to those questions. You don't get answers by rushing to judgment and turning the whole process upside down.

This resolution starts by saying that we censure her, that we remove her from committee. The very next component of it says that we direct the Committee on Ethics to conduct an investigation. That is the opposite of due process, and I hope at least future generations will understand that is not how we hold people accountable, whether it is under criminal law, under civil law, or under an ethics process, which they purport to want to be launching here.

Again, go back to the George Santos standard. The reason we voted against just hanging him out to dry, censuring him, and expelling him is because the process hadn't happened yet. Democrats and Republicans together did it, but they are thinking in solely partisan terms.

Even Matt Gaetz, accused of having sex with a 17-year-old, was never censured by the House of Representatives. Even with Speaker McCarthy and others condemning him for what he did, we did not censure him.

Think about what you are doing to the precedents of this body by trying to attack Ms. PLASKETT.

Let me just close with a personal thought. I wasn't going to bring it up because I didn't want to embarrass her, but she was one of the three finest students I ever had in constitutional law. She was a straight-A student in the early 1990s. She is a straight-A student in the 21st century. I am proud not only that she was my student but that she is my friend and that she is my colleague. She doesn't disgrace us in any way. She goes to work every day for the people of the Virgin Islands, and we are proud of her.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the President is occupying the minds of my good friends on the left rent-free, and essentially, they bring him up every time. Keep doing it. Keep doing it.

This President has a record that is second to none. I hope my listeners in the audience can distinguish between just words and babbling on when they reject the facts of what has been presented. Texts don't lie. They can offer all the excuses—and I do think Ms. PLASKETT is a nice lady. She made a mistake here, a bad mistake. She took advice from a convicted pedophile. That is indefensible in this discussion here today.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened to my colleagues defend the indefensible. I have heard everything from this is old news to this is just politics. Not a single person has disputed the key fact: written records in Epstein's own estate documents show Delegate PLASKETT sought his input for an official hearing.

This is the issue, that alone. Everything else is just noise.

This Chamber cannot overlook that a sitting Member of Congress coordinated with a convicted sex offender to prepare questions for an official proceeding. Imagine telling the American people that that is acceptable. Imagine explaining to parents all across this country that Congress sees no problem with relying on the counsel of a predator of our innocent children.

Some of my colleagues want to blur the edges, soften the facts, or bury this under procedural fog—noise, as I call it. Sunlight is the best disinfectant, and accountability is not optional.

□ 1640

This resolution is not excessive at all. It is appropriate. It is measured. It is necessary at this time.

The question before us is very simple: Do we uphold a minimal—a minimal—standard for ethical conduct, or do we just shrug and say: Well, maybe next time?

Mr. Speaker, the public deserves better. The House deserves better. The American people deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the resolution.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on adoption of the resolution.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT RELATING TO "BUFFALO FIELD OFFICE RECORD OF DECISION AND APPROVED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT"

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 879, I call up the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 130) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Land Management relating to "Buffalo Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment", and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 879, the joint resolution is considered read.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 130

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Bureau of Land Management relating to "Buffalo Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment" (issued November 20, 2024, as a record of decision and approved resource management plan amendment, and a letter of opinion from the Government Accountability Office dated September 18, 2025, printed in the Congressional Record on September 29, 2025, on pages S6825–S6826, concluding that such record of decision and approved resource management plan is a rule under the Congressional Review Act), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The joint resolution shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.J. Res. 130.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.J. Res. 130, which would repeal the Bureau of Land Management's misguided resource management plan, or RMP, amendment for the Buffalo Field Office in Wyoming, which was finalized in the twilight hours of the Biden-Harris administration.

Wyoming's Powder River Basin currently supplies 40 percent of the Nation's coal. The RMP amendment in question effectively halted future Federal coal leasing across a region in Wyoming larger than New Jersey and located in the heart of America's coal country. Without repeal, the RMP amendment will end coal production in the region entirely by 2041 and close 12 active mines.

The RMP amendment is a death blow to America's energy security, Wyoming's workers, and the economic backbone of the State itself.

It is projected that U.S. electricity demand will grow by as much as 128 gigawatts through 2029, and global energy demand is expected to double by 2050.

Coal is reliable, affordable, and essential to meet the increasing power demands of the AI revolution and advanced manufacturing. The RMP amendment locked up an astonishing 48 billion short tons of coal. That is enough to meet U.S. coal demand for the next 116 years.

Mr. Speaker, 92 percent of Wyoming's coal is exported to other States, helping keep the lights on and utility prices affordable in distant places as far as Texas, Illinois, and my home State of Arkansas.

Nationwide, residential electricity prices have increased by 13 percent since 2022, and overturning misguided policies like this RMP amendment will help make the cost of living more affordable for families across America.

It is time to unleash our domestic resources to put this money back into the pockets of American families by repealing the Biden administration's anti-American energy policies. What is more, instead of working with the State, the Biden administration blatantly ignored local opposition at every stage of this process and rammed this RMP amendment through to appease environmental extremists.

The Biden administration provided a limited opportunity for public comment or engagement on this RMP amendment. Wyoming's Governor, a unified congressional delegation, locally elected officials, Tribes, and local communities all expressed strong opposition to this plan amendment. The previous administration ignored them all.

According to local representatives, it is suspect and disturbing that such a dramatic change to the current land use plan would solicit such little engagement during the public comment period. Campbell and Johnson County commissioners who represent the local communities affected by this plan stated that whatever information they provided to the BLM in this process was ignored by the Federal agency.

Overturning the RMP amendment takes power from bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., and returns it to the people of Wyoming.

The BLM also ignored Tribal input in developing this RMP amendment. The

Navajo Transitional Energy Company, which is wholly owned by the Navajo Nation, provided detailed comments opposing this amendment. They were all dismissed by the BLM.

In a letter they submitted to the agency, they stated:

"BLM consistently downplayed the reasonably foreseeable negative impacts of the mines' closures on the surrounding social justice communities. And it did not even consider the jobs lost in the downstream communities that rely on the [Powder River Basin] coal."

Energy security is national security, and Wyoming's energy industry remains indispensable to ensuring that America stays energy dominant. Wyoming's Powder River Basin, with its low-sulfur coal, produces the world's cleanest burning coal. We should be focused on exporting this abundant natural resource to our allies abroad, not burying this baseload power under layers of bureaucracy.

By passing this CRA today, we are advancing President Trump's executive orders on unleashing American energy and reinvigorating America's coal industry. We are also restoring hundreds of millions of dollars in future revenue for Wyoming's K-12 public education system and protecting more than 4,000 high-paying jobs in rural Wyoming.

In conjunction with the pro-energy policies included in the working families tax cut law, this CRA also has the potential to generate more than \$260 million for the Federal Treasury.

This CRA helps the U.S. remain energy dominant and will lower prices for families, strengthen our economy, and boost real wages for hardworking men and women. I urge my colleagues to stand with Wyoming, stand with American workers, and stand for energy security by supporting this resolution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I wish Chairman WESTERMAN a happy birthday, but even that goodwill does not change the fact that this is bad legislation. So, unfortunately, I am going to have to rise in opposition to the bill while wishing the gentleman a happy birthday.

Mr. Speaker, we are all grateful that the Republican shutdown is finally over, but millions of Americans are still on the cusp of losing healthcare. They are struggling to put food on the table. After their 7-week paid vacation, I can't imagine anything more disconnected than for House Republicans to come back here and make their first priority not helping working families to make ends meet but jamming through more favors for their billionaire buddies.

□ 1650

These three Congressional Review Act, or CRA, resolutions treat America's public lands like they are just lines on a balance sheet. They silence