

## **Open letter to Members of Congress on the immediate start of an impeachment inquiry against President Donald J. Trump**

Special counsel Robert Mueller has essentially suggested – noting that a sitting president cannot be indicted – that his criminal investigation of president Trump should be referred to Congress as a political investigation, inviting Congress to start an impeachment inquiry. The president is not above the law.

There is now overwhelming information to justify that Congress starts impeachment hearings immediately. There is no need to wait for the full Mueller report, or for the other information that has been subpoenaed by Congress. All the more because president Trump is incessantly stonewalling all information requests, with the intention to fatally derail the oversight role of Congress. This continued abuse of power cannot be tolerated. Congress has a constitutional duty – fundamentally – to act as a check on presidential power.

An impeachment reader that lays out the full case:

[www.socialcritic.org/fascism.htm](http://www.socialcritic.org/fascism.htm)

(excellent references: [www.socialcritic.org/ref.htm](http://www.socialcritic.org/ref.htm))

By not starting an impeachment inquiry now, Congress would signal to president Trump – and to the American people:

the president is above the law;

he can abuse his power;

he can systematically obstruct justice;

he can stonewall Congress with utter contempt;

he can act with impunity;

he will not be held accountable;

he can terrorize, bully and corrupt the whole nation;

he can behave like Roy Cohn and Senator Joseph McCarthy;

he can create paranoia, chaos, paralysis and a string of crises, to unleash his own power;

he can dehumanize and demonize immigrants – even people of color in general – and treat them arbitrarily and cruelly;

he can invite a foreign adversary to criminally interfere in the election;

he can side with former KGB officer Putin against the unanimous American intelligence community;

he can lie incessantly;  
he can relentlessly attack truth, reality, reason and science;  
he can build a personal cult on lies and fear;  
he can continue his assault on the free press as “the enemy of the people”;  
he can merge the White House and sycophantic Fox News into a propaganda machine;  
he can silence his critics by bullying and by threats of violence and incarceration;  
he can direct and conspire in the crime of campaign finance violations – meant to cover up his vile adultery – in order to mislead the American people and to win the presidential election;  
he can essentially buy the presidency, and reward his campaign donors by a massive transfer of wealth to corporate America at the expense of working families and the nation’s debt;  
he can refuse to enforce protective laws on health, safety and the environment;  
his business empire can operate as a money laundering machine for the Russian mafia state;  
his massive corruption, profiteering and nepotism are condoned;  
his racism, misogyny, bigotry, divisiveness, and hatemongering remain unchallenged;  
his manifest amorality and mental unfitness for the presidency are acceptable;  
he can be trusted with having sole authority over the launch of America’s nuclear arsenal;  
he can – impulsively and recklessly – threaten world peace, risk a nuclear holocaust, and jeopardize the natural planet;  
he can violate international law, destroy the liberal-democratic world order, and assault fundamental human and civil rights;  
he can cozy up to dictators and simultaneously attack America’s democratic allies;  
he can create a make-believe world with himself as the ultimate dealmaker, while in reality his ignorance, flip-flops and arsonism result in tearing up agreements;  
he can celebrate Independence Day with a grandiose display of his own authoritarianism;  
he can nominate a Supreme Court justice who will decide the fate of his presidency, while he is under criminal investigation and facing the prospect of impeachment proceedings.

By not starting an impeachment inquiry of president Trump immediately, Congress would be abdicating its duty to check his abuse of power, thus enabling the president:  
to put himself above the law;  
to attack the Constitution and the rule of law, the system of checks and balances, and the separation of powers;  
to assault America’s democracy, notably with the welcome help of a foreign adversary;  
to continue his path to tyranny, fascism and global destruction.

Unequaled in American history, president Trump has caused – by his amoral character and by his runaway abuse of power – both a moral crisis and a constitutional crisis.

Congress must remedy this moral and constitutional crisis by exercising its constitutional obligation to immediately start an impeachment inquiry.

It is high time for Congress to no longer let itself be terrorized, bullied and corrupted.

It is high time for Congress to stand up:

against the president's amorality, lawlessness and unbridled lying;

against his bullying and divisiveness;

against his threats of violence, incarceration and deportation;

for America's ideals of freedom, equality and democracy;

for the rule of law – where no bully is above the law.

The default alternative is that Congress acquiesces in a cult-like dictatorship.

"No one man can terrorize a whole nation unless we are all his accomplices." – Edward R. Murrow on McCarthyism

"Each failure to demand necessary accountability invites greater abuse and diminishes the prospect that accountability will ever be achieved." – John Nichols in his foreword to Ron Fein, John Bonifaz and Ben Clements - *The Constitution Demands It: The Case for the Impeachment of Donald Trump*

If Trump loses, we know what to expect: anger, fear and disruption. If he is beaten in 2020 he will not leave peacefully. – Robert Reich article in *The Guardian*

"When the terrorist attack comes, remember that authoritarians exploit such events in order to consolidate power. The sudden disaster that requires the end of checks and balances, the dissolution of opposition parties, the suspension of freedom of expression, the right to a fair trial, and so on, is the oldest trick in the Hitlerian book." – Timothy Snyder - *On Tyranny*

The polls show that the support for Donald Trump has been remarkably stable compared to just before the 2016 election (43%). Democrats risk making the same mistake by taking their win in 2020 for granted. Starting an impeachment inquiry is the constitutional way to make the case to the American people on the president's amorality, pathological lying, misconduct, and abuse of power. The Constitution gives Congress the fundamental duty of impeachment, as a check on presidential power. Both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were written essentially to guard against a tyrannical demagogue. It would be an irony of truly historic proportions if Congress – confronted with an authoritarian demagogue as president – would today be derelict in its duty of being a check on presidential power, in the heat of battle, by basically handing this role back to the voter. It would be foolish to rely solely on the 2020

election, considering the ongoing abuse of power by the president, his continued stonewalling of Congress, the cult-like behavior of his party, as well as the merging of the White House and sycophantic Fox News into the personal propaganda machine of the president.

Given this amoral president, it is now up to Congress to be the voice for America's high ideals. As Thomas Paine famously wrote in 1776, motivating America at a critical moment when its freedom and independence were in the balance: "These are the times that try men's souls."

Congress should let the constitutional system of checks and balances do its work, just as it was meant to do. The Constitution and America's ideals will in the process prove a welcome force – hopefully – for the nation to come together, to heal itself, and to resume its road to freedom. And, not to forget, for the Republican party to recover its moral and constitutional roots.

For the checks and balances of the U.S. government to function as intended, it is high time for Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell to stand up to the president, or at least to give others in Congress the opportunity to do so. This is a call to Republicans in Congress for conscience and responsibility. They should no longer let themselves be terrorized by presidential bullying. They should no longer normalize the president's misconduct and lawlessness – whether they act out of fear, indifference or opportunism, and whether they are bystanders or accomplices. Congress should be an effective check on the presidency.

Starting an impeachment inquiry can unite the country – counterintuitive as it may sound – as it allows the extremely divided country to recover its shared moral and constitutional roots, and to resume its common road toward freedom.

All the best with celebrating your country's freedom. Happy Fourth of July.

Social Criticism Review

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