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CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS

OPENING STATEMENT

JUDICIARY FULL COMMITTEE

HEARING ON

*“Examining the Allegations of Misconduct Against IRS
Commissioner John Koskinen, Part I”*

2141 RAYBURN HOB

May 24, 2016

10:00 AM

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- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning and welcome to our witnesses.
- The first thing I want to say and emphasize is that **this is not an impeachment hearing.**

- The purpose of today's hearing is simply to allow Mr. Chaffetz, Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and Mr. DeSantis, Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security to present findings from a series of hearings exploring the conduct of the IRS Commissioner Koskinen concerning alleged targeting of citizen groups for adverse treatment based on political affiliation.
- Despite Mr. Chaffetz's introduction of H.Res.737, a resolution to censure IRS Commissioner John Koskinen and to urge his resignation or removal for the alleged targeting of citizen groups for adverse treatment based on political affiliation, we know that House Speaker Paul Ryan has refused to allow any impeachment resolution against the Commissioner to come to the floor.
- Article I, Section 2, Clause 5 of the U.S. Constitution provides that *the House of Representatives shall have the sole power of impeachment.*
- **The impeachment process is designed to be used only in rare and dire circumstances.**
- So rare and dire that, the House has only impeached 19 individuals since 1789.
- As professor Woodrow Wilson explained:

*“Nothing short of the grossest offenses against the plain law of the land will suffice to give it speed and effectiveness. **Indignation so great as to overgrow party interest** may secure a conviction; nothing else can.”*

- Allegations against the IRS have been investigated, analyzed and reported on *ad nauseam* – by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, the Department of Justice and the Treasury Department – all with no such finding.
- The IRS alone has spent more than \$20 million and devoted more than 160,000 personnel hours to collect, review, and produce over 1.3 million pages of documents to the investigating committees.
- Further review and exploration on this matter is purely in vain.
- It is critically important to point out the large-scale lack of support for this measure and for this hearing before us today.
- Rep. Charles Boustany (R-LA), chairman of the Subcommittee for Tax Policy, has argued that impeachment is a waste of the House’s time...[in fact] it is time to move on.”

- Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT) has said that there is no interest in impeachment in the Senate, where a two-thirds vote would be required to remove the Commissioner. He has stated that “We can have our disagreements with him, but that doesn’t mean that there’s an impeachable offense.”
- Notably, the Majority’s limited one paragraph memorandum on the discourse and outlook for today’s hearing is telling.
- It is a shame that we are once again wasting valuable resources on futile hearings and personal or political agendas.
- I am disappointed that it has come this far and that we must yet again go down a dead end road.
- I am, however, hopeful that perhaps some additional review, exploration or analysis of the plethora of information retrieved over several years of investigation will finally give Mr. Chaffetz and Mr. DeSantis some closure.
- Thank you.