

NEWSROOM

Pelosi Floor Speech in Support of Resolution for Open Hearings on Trump's Abuse of Power

OCTOBER 31, 2019 PRESS RELEASE

Washington, D.C. – Speaker Nancy Pelosi delivered remarks on the Floor of the House of Representatives in support of H. Res. 660, which establishes the procedure for the next phase of the House's impeachment inquiry. Below are the Speaker's remarks:

Speaker Pelosi. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

And, Madam Speaker, thank you for the recognition.

I want to begin my remarks [with] some of the most beautiful words in our country's history: 'We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and to our posterity to ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States.'

It goes on, immediately, to establish Article I, the Legislative Branch; Article II, the Executive Branch; Article III, the Judiciary. The genius of the Constitution, a separation of powers: three co-equal branches of government to be a check and balance on each other. And, it's to that that we take the oath of office. We gather here on that opening day with our families gathered round to proudly raise our hands to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. And, that is exactly what we are doing today.

Sadly, this is not any cause for any glee or comfort. This is something that is very solemn, that is something prayerful. And, that we had to gather so much information to take us to this next step.

Again, this is a solemn occasion. Nobody, I doubt anybody in this place, or anybody that you know, comes to Congress to take the oath of office, comes to Congress to impeach the President of the United States, unless his actions are jeopardizing our honoring our oath of office.

I'm grateful to our Committee Chairs for all the careful and thoughtful investigation they have been doing as this inquiry has proceeded. Today, the House takes the next step forward as we establish the procedures for open hearings, conducted by the House Intelligence Committee, so that the public can see the facts for themselves.

This resolution ensures transparency, advancing public disclosure of depositions transcripts and outlining the procedures for the transfer of evidence to the Judiciary Committee to use in its proceedings.

It enables effective public hearings: setting out procedures for the questioning of witnesses and continuing the precedent of giving the Minority the same rights in questioning witnesses as the Majority, which has been true at every step of this inquiry despite what you might hear.

It provides the President and his counsel opportunities to participate, including presenting his case, submitting requests for testimony, attending hearings, raising objections to testimony given, cross-examining witnesses and more. And, contrary to what you heard

today, we gave more opportunity to the – to his case than was given to other Presidents before. And, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for making that point so clearly.

These actions, this process, these open hearings, seeking the truth and making it available to the American people, will inform Congress on the very difficult decisions we will have to make in the future as to whether to impeach the President.

That decision has not been made. That's what the inquiry will investigate and then we can make the decision, based on the truth. I don't know why the Republicans are afraid of the truth. Every Member should support allowing the American people to hear the facts for themselves. This – that is really what this vote is about. It is about the truth.

And, what is at stake? What is at stake, in all of this, is nothing less than our democracy.

I proudly stand next to the flag, and I thank the gentleman from New York for providing it for us. This flag, so many have fought and died for this flag, which stands for our democracy.

When Benjamin Franklin came out of Independence Hall – you heard this over and over – on September 17, 1787, the day our Constitution was adopted, he came out of Independence Hall, people said to him, 'Dr. Franklin, what do we have a monarchy or a republic?' And, he said, as you know, he said, 'A republic, if we can keep it.' If we can keep it.

And this Constitution is the blueprint for our republic and not a monarchy. But, when we have a President who says, 'Article II says I can do whatever I want,' that is in defiance of the separation of powers. That's not what our Constitution says.

So, what is at stake is our democracy. What are we fighting for? Defending our democracy for the people.

You know in the early days of our revolution, Thomas Paine said, 'The times have found us.' The times found our Founders to declare independence from a monarchy, to fight a war of independence, write our founding documents and thank God they made them amendable so we can always be expanding freedom. And, the genius, again that genius of that Constitution was the separation of power. Any usurping of that power is a violation of our oath of office.

So, proudly, you all, we all raised our hands to protect and defend and support the Constitution of the United States. That's what this vote is about.


Today – we think the time found our Founders, the times found others in the course of our history to protect our democracy, to keep our country united. The times have found each and every one of us in this room and in our country to pay attention to how we protect and defend the Constitution of the United States – honoring the vision of our Founders who declared independence from a monarch and established a country contrary to that principle, honoring men and women in uniform who fight for our freedom and for our democracy and honoring the aspirations of our children so that no President, whoever he or she may be in the future, could decide that Article II says they can do whatever they want.

Again, let us honor our oath of office. Let us defend our democracy. Let us have a good vote today and have clarity, clarity as to how we proceed, why we proceed, and again, doing so in a way that honors the Constitution. We must honor the Constitution and how we do this. We must respect the institution we serve. And, we must heed the further words of our Founders, 'E pluribus unim,' from many one. They didn't know how many we would be, or how different we would be, but they knew we needed to always be unify.

Hopefully, as we go forward with this, the clarity of purpose, the clarity of procedure, a clarity of fact, a clarity of truth about the truth – it's about the Constitution – we will do so in a way that brings people together that is healing rather than dividing. And, that is how we will honor our oath of office.

I urge an aye vote and yield back the balance of my time.

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