



Rep. Rashida Tlaib, the first Palestinian-American woman and one of the first Muslim women elected to Congress, was sworn in to office Thursday. | Rashida Tlaib

CONGRESS

Freshman Rep. Tlaib: Dem majority will 'impeach the motherf---er'

By CAITLIN OPRYSKO | 01/04/2019 09:13 AM EST | Updated 01/04/2019 09:24 PM EST

Freshman Rep. Rashida Tlaib declared Thursday night that the newly installed Democratic majority in the House will "go in there and impeach the motherf---er," breaking with party leaders and stirring controversy just hours after officially taking office.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and other top Democrats have been largely hesitant to promise President Donald Trump's impeachment, preferring instead to wait for the results of the ongoing Russia investigation led by special counsel Robert Mueller. But Tlaib (D-Mich.) and others in the newly installed House have expressed an eagerness to begin impeachment proceedings even before Mueller issues a final report.

“When your son looks at you and says, ‘Momma look, you won, bullies don’t win,’ and I said ‘Baby they don’t,’ because we’re going to go in there and we’re gonna impeach the motherf---er,” Tlaib said at a party Thursday night. Video of the congresswoman's remarks was captured and posted to Twitter by user @_NestorRuiz and were reported by journalists from The Washington Post and The Huffington Post.

Earlier Thursday Tlaib’s hometown newspaper, the Detroit Free Press, published an editorial she co-authored in which she called for impeachment proceedings against Trump to begin, albeit in a much more measured tone.

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Pelosi on Friday said she wouldn’t have necessarily used the same language as Tlaib, and that her comments did not represent the position of all House Democrats. But Pelosi also pointed out that the president himself is known for using similarly coarse rhetoric.

“I don’t think it’s anything worse than the president has said,” she said at a town hall hosted by MSNBC, adding later that “some of the words that he uses have a direct impact on people’s lives. My colleague’s comments do not have an impact on people’s lives.”

“Generationally, that would not be language I would use, but nonetheless, I don’t think we should make a big deal of it,” Pelosi argued.

Tlaib, the first Palestinian-American woman and one of the first Muslim women elected to Congress, had been sworn in earlier Thursday on Capitol Hill. Her office did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but Tlaib doubled down on her comments Friday morning on Twitter, claiming that Trump’s presidency is a “constitutional crisis.”

"I will always speak truth to power," she wrote, including the hashtag "#unapologeticallyMe."

"This is not just about Donald Trump. This is about all of us. In the face of this constitutional crisis, we must rise," she added.

Asked to address the growing criticism of her remarks and language, Tlaib refused to apologize Friday evening and instead said that her choice of words is not any different from how her constituents talk.

"I am very passionate, and I grew up in an incredibly beautiful, urban community — the city of Detroit — born and raised," she said during an interview with a local TV station. "We say colorful things in interesting ways, but I tell you, the president of the United States is my focus. The residents back home are my focus."

Trump responded to Tlaib's comments directly on Friday afternoon, saying she "dishonored herself."

"This is a person that I don't know. I assume she's new. I think she dishonored herself, and I think she dishonored her family," he told reporters at a news conference. "Using language like that in front of her son, and whoever else was there, I thought that was a great dishonor to her and to her family. I thought it was highly disrespectful to the united States of America."

Asked about the video on Friday morning, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairwoman Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.) neither condemned nor endorsed the comments.

"Well, passions are running high," she said in an interview on CNN's "New Day." "Let's just leave it at that, okay?"

Bustos, who represents a rural Illinois Congressional district where Trump won in 2016, also echoed Pelosi's calls to hold off on impeachment talk until Mueller finishes his investigation.

Rep. Jerry Nadler, the New York Democrat who now chairs the House panel that would initiate impeachment proceedings, was more firm in his objection to Tlaib's language. In an interview with CNN, he also threw cold water on the idea of guaranteeing impeachment.

"I don't really like that kind of language. But more to the point, I disagree with what she said. It is too early to talk about that intelligently. We have to follow the facts," he said,

instead promoting legislation Democrats plan to take up that would shield Mueller from outside influence.

“We have to get the facts. We will see where the facts lead,” he said. “Maybe that will lead to impeachment. Maybe it won't. It is much too early.”

CONGRESS

Dems livid after Tlaib vows to ‘impeach the motherf—er’

By RACHAEL BADE, HEATHER CAYGLE and JOHN BRESNAHAN

Tlaib's expletive-laden comment was widely shown on morning cable news shows and drew swift condemnation from Republicans, including from the president, who seemingly jumped on the remarks as evidence the new Democratic House would focus more on opposing the president than on governing.

"How do you impeach a president who has won perhaps the greatest election of all time, done nothing wrong (no Collusion with Russia, it was the Dems that Colluded), had the most successful first two years of any president, and is the most popular Republican in party history 93%?" Trump wrote on Twitter on Friday morning.

In another tweet, Trump portrayed the push as a sign of desperation due to the success of his administration in a Friday morning tweet, writing that Democrats “only want to impeach me because they know they can’t win in 2020, too much success!”

The White House further weighed in on the controversy later Friday morning, with press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders echoing Trump’s tweet, while deputy press secretary Hogan Gidley labeled Tlaib’s comments disruptive.

“It shows you kind of what’s on the mind of Democrats right now, they’re into name calling,” Gidley said in an interview on Fox News, pointing to a Georgia congressman under fire for appearing to compare the president to Hitler.

“Now she's using obscene language to describe this president. If they want to come to Washington to engage in this type of nasty, ridiculous outrageous rhetoric instead of focusing on the issue at hand... they are going to have a very difficult time in this town and with their constituencies,” he said.

RNC Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel contended that “expletive-filled rants about our president tell you all you need to know about the priorities of the Democrats in Congress.”

“President Trump fights every day for a better life for Americans,” she said in a tweet. “Democrats are only committed to fighting President Trump.”

Republican leadership in the House weighed in as well.

“Meet the new House Democrat majority,” House Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) wrote on Twitter, linking to a story about the video, while House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) told Fox News that Democrats' "whole focus here is to try to attack this president while we are trying to move America forward."

McCarthy was more forceful speaking to reporters in the Capitol on Friday before heading to the White House to discuss border security, denouncing Pelosi's comments and calling on Pelosi to speak with Tlaib about the remark.

Republican Caucus Chairwoman Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.) denounced Tlaib's' “very foul language used in accusations of the necessity to impeach,” adding that “we are in a situation where the Democrats are clearly bringing into this offense that they take charge a level of rhetoric, level of attack, level of vitriol that is not good for the country and ignores the very real national security challenge we face.”

She rejected comparisons between Tlaib's remarks and some of the oft-criticized rhetoric used by the president, telling reporters that “I am not going to repeat the allegations because frankly, I don't want my kids to hear them.”

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