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OPINION

## Impeach President Donald Trump | Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial Board

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The Inquirer Editorial Board | [opinion@inquirer.com](mailto:opinion@inquirer.com)





Since taking office as president in 2017, Donald Trump has used the unfiltered power of social media to broadcast his daily disdain and mockery of rivals, and to promote his version of the truth.

That he has continued this mockery to the impeachment process — the most serious action Congress can initiate beyond a declaration of war — is of grave concern.

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On Tuesday, the Democratic leadership of the House of Representatives [unveiled two articles of impeachment](#) against the president, calling for his trial and removal from office, and charging abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.

The [first article](#) charges Trump with abuse of power for “soliciting the interference of a foreign government to influence the 2020 presidential election.” Trump’s [pressuring Ukraine to act on his behalf](#) in the campaign, holding federal aid hostage in the process, has harmed our national security – and our democracy.

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But it is the second article – the obstruction of Congress, by his “unprecedented, categorical and indiscriminate defiance of subpoenas” – that should have us all frightened. It reads:

*“In the history of the Republic, no President has ever ordered the complete defiance of an impeachment inquiry or sought to obstruct and impede so comprehensively the ability of the House of Representatives to investigate ‘high Crimes and Misdemeanors.’ This abuse of office served to cover up the President’s own repeated misconduct and to seize and control the power of impeachment – and thus to nullify a vital constitutional safeguard.”*

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In defying these orders, and through his continued ridicule of the impeachment process and the members of Congress who initiated it, Trump has severely disrespected his office and the document he swore to protect and uphold. Should this process end with a trial and a Senate vote to remove him from office — a prospect that seems highly unlikely — it's not hard to imagine that he would insist that the process was invalid and refuse to go.

Such an act of tyranny is what the Constitution was created to protect against. That is why this impeachment process is urgent and should move forward without delay.

The impeachment investigation has been an attempt to get to the truth about the president's abuse of power. One career civil servant after another has testified to the same facts confirming the whistle-blower complaint that triggered this investigation. Those facts have not been disputed, even by most of the president's defenders.

That ensures that the shocking language describing Trump's actions — "high crimes and misdemeanors," "threat to national security," and "clear and present danger" — are not partisan weapons.

And that is why we endorse a vote to impeach the president. While his removal from office is unlikely, his crimes against the country, and the Constitution, warrant that outcome.

The articles are expected to go to a full House vote next week. All eyes should be on two local lawmakers, Jeff Van Drew, a Democrat from New Jersey who voted against an impeachment inquiry, and Brian Fitzpatrick, a Republican who has shown a propensity for challenging the party line. Both need to step up on the impeachment vote — if not to punish abuse of power, then to affirm Congress' standing as a coequal branch of government.



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