

Trump Calls Representative Justin Amash a 'Loser' Over Impeachment Talk

By Glenn Thrush

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WASHINGTON — President Trump attacked Representative Justin Amash as a “total lightweight” and “loser” on Sunday, a day after the Michigan Republican said Mr. Trump’s behavior as president had reached the “threshold for impeachment.”

The president’s attacks reinforced Mr. Amash’s isolation within his party, as even the Republican lawmakers who might be most sympathetic to his position avoided stepping forward to join him.

Earlier on Sunday, Senator Mitt Romney, a Utah Republican who has been one of the few members of his party to even mildly chastise Mr. Trump in public after the release of the Mueller report, described Mr. Amash’s statement as “courageous.” But Mr. Romney, the 2012 Republican presidential nominee, dismissed the idea of impeachment, saying on CNN’s “State of the Union” that the evidence lacked “the full element that you need to prove an obstruction-of-justice case.”

Mr. Trump — who has stonewalled requests by House Democrats for documents and has commanded current and former aides to turn down requests to testify before investigative committees — was not so circumspect.

“Never a fan of @justinamash, a total lightweight who opposes me and some of our great Republican ideas and policies just for the sake of getting his name out there through controversy,” Mr. Trump wrote in a midmorning Twitter riff that included, among other things, criticism of the “Fake News Sunday Political Shows” and boasts about his judicial appointments and health care policies.

“Justin is a loser who sadly plays right into our opponents hands!” he added.

On Saturday, Mr. Amash, 39, became the first sitting Republican member of Congress to suggest that Mr. Trump’s actions, as described in the report of the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, met the constitutional threshold of high crimes and misdemeanors.

“President Trump has engaged in impeachable conduct,” Mr. Amash wrote in a series of Twitter messages after reading the redacted version of the 448-page report.

Contrary to the public statements and summaries offered by Attorney General William P. Barr, “Mueller’s report reveals that President Trump engaged in specific actions and a pattern of behavior that meet the threshold for impeachment,” wrote Mr. Amash, a self-described strict constitutionalist who has considered running against Mr. Trump in the 2020 Republican primary.

It is a judgment not publicly shared by any other Republican member of Congress.

“Justin Amash has reached a different conclusion than I have,” said Mr. Romney, who has said he was “sickened” and “appalled” by Mr. Mueller’s report.

Mr. Trump and his team have successfully cowed Republican critics through sheer political force: The president is overwhelmingly popular among the Republican base — and the White House and national Republican organizations controlled by Trump loyalists have threatened anyone who opposes them with supporting potential primary opponents.

“It’s sad to see Congressman Amash parroting the Democrats’ talking points on Russia,” Ronna McDaniel, the Republican National Committee chairwoman, said in a statement. “The only people still fixated on the Russia collusion hoax are political foes of President Trump hoping to defeat him in 2020 by any desperate means possible.”

“Voters in Amash’s district strongly support this president, and would rather their congressman work to support the president’s policies,” she said.

On Saturday, State Representative Jim Lower, an outspoken Trump supporter who lives in Mr. Amash’s Grand Rapids-area district, suggested he would challenge the five-term congressman next year.

“This cannot go unchallenged! I support @realDonaldTrump, I support West Michigan values, I support our party’s values,” Mr. Lower tweeted. He promised a major announcement on his potential challenge in the coming week.

Mr. Amash's conclusions track closely with those of many Democrats. While Speaker Nancy Pelosi has sought to block attempts to impeach Mr. Trump based on the findings of the Mueller report, she declared her openness last week to initiating an impeachment inquiry as a means of forcing administration officials to comply with the subpoenas of the six House committees investigating Mr. Trump's conduct.

Mr. Amash was one of 14 Republicans to side with Democrats in their unsuccessful attempt to override the president's first veto, which upheld an emergency declaration to divert funding from other federal projects to build a wall along the southwestern border.

Common Questions About Impeachment

- **What is impeachment?**

Impeachment is charging a holder of public office with misconduct.

- **Why is the impeachment process happening now?**

A whistle-blower complaint filed in August said that [White House officials believed they had witnessed Mr. Trump abuse his power for political gain.](#)

- **Can you explain what President Trump is accused of doing?**

President Trump is accused of breaking the law by pressuring the president of Ukraine to look into former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., a potential Democratic opponent in the 2020 election.

- **What did the President say to the president of Ukraine?**

Here is a [reconstructed transcript](#) of Mr. Trump's call to President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, released by The White House.

- **What is the impeachment process like?**

Here are answers to [seven key questions](#) about the process.

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