

Rep. Rashida Tlaib profanely promised to impeach Trump. She's not sorry.

[washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/01/04/hours-after-making-history-rep-rashida-tlaib-profanely-promises-](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/01/04/hours-after-making-history-rep-rashida-tlaib-profanely-promises-)

By Amy B Wang

Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) made history Thursday afternoon for being the first Palestinian American woman sworn into Congress.

Hours later, she made headlines for swearing at a bar — in comments that continued to reverberate in Washington the following day.

At a reception Thursday night for the progressive group MoveOn.org, Tlaib vowed that the new Democrat-controlled House would be focusing on ousting President Trump from office.

“Don’t you ever, ever, let anybody take away your roots, your culture, who you are. Ever,” Tlaib told the crowd in the packed space. “Because when you [hang onto those things], people love you and you win. And when your son looks at you and says, ‘Mama, look. You won. Bullies don’t win.’

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“And I said, ‘Baby, they don’t,’ because we’re gonna go in there and we’re gonna impeach the motherf-----.”

Trump on Friday called Tlaib’s remarks “disgraceful” and claimed he didn’t know the lawmaker.

“I assume she’s new. I think she dishonored herself, and I think she dishonored her family,” Trump said at an afternoon news conference. “I thought it was highly disrespectful to the United States of America.”

As White House press secretary Sarah Sanders suggested hours earlier, Trump said he could not be impeached because he was too successful a president.

The crowd inside the State Room bar, near the Capitol, had responded to Tlaib’s remarks with applause, cheers and shouts of approval, according to a widely shared video taken by immigration activist Nestor Ruiz.

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But online and across Washington, Tlaib’s comments were met with divided responses: Many of her supporters said Tlaib had successfully channeled their own political frustration, though some — including a few Democratic colleagues — criticized her choice of words.

On the right, there was outrage.

“Look at the brand-new elected congresswoman and her language of what she says to her son in a rally that she thought was private last night,” House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said on Fox News. “Their whole focus here is to try and attack this president when we’re trying to move America forward.”

It’s not clear if Tlaib thought the MoveOn reception was private. Several journalists were in attendance and multiple activists were filming her. Representatives for MoveOn did not respond to a request for comment.

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Tlaib mostly avoided reporters' questions at the Capitol on Friday morning; but on Twitter, she seemed to shrug off judgments about her speech.

“I will always speak truth to power,” Tlaib tweeted, adding the hashtag #unapologeticallyMe.

I will always speak truth to power. #unapologeticallyMe

— Rashida Tlaib (@RashidaTlaib) January 4, 2019

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

— Rashida Tlaib (@RashidaTlaib) January 4, 2019

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) acknowledged “legitimate” outrage over Trump but said it was premature to be talking about impeachment. Pelosi has often said lawmakers need to let special counsel Robert S. Mueller III’s investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election play out.

“It’s about the facts and the law, and where that takes you,” Pelosi told MSNBC’s Joy Ann Reid at the taping of an MSNBC town hall Friday morning.

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Pelosi also said she didn’t like Tlaib’s language but was “not in the censorship business” — and suggested there wouldn’t have been so much hand-wringing over Tlaib’s comments if she were a man.

“What she said is less offensive than what President Trump said about John McCain,” Pelosi told Reid. (It’s unclear exactly which instance Pelosi was referencing, as the president insulted and snubbed the late senator multiple times during their years-long feud.)

Several of Tlaib’s new Democratic colleagues, called upon to respond to the comments, cautioned against talking about impeachment before there was evidence to support it. Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.) said it was “too early to talk about that intelligently.” Rep. Elijah E.

Cummings (D-MD) characterized the speech as “inappropriate” and potentially distracting and counterproductive for Democrats.

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“Well, passions are running high. Let’s just leave it at that, okay?” Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.) said on CNN, before echoing Pelosi in saying they needed to wait for Mueller to finish his investigation. “Then we’ll take it from there.”

Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) was careful to emphasize Tlaib was but one member of a large caucus.

“The House of Representatives is representative of the people of the United States of America. [Tlaib] represents a group of people that have strong feelings. She had strong feelings and she expressed it,” Dingell said. “But that’s what great about our caucus. We’re diverse but we all come together when we’ve got to get things done.”

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Several other Democrats said they disapproved of Tlaib’s language — while also being quick to point out Trump had not been a shining example of verbal decorum while campaigning and in office. By Friday afternoon, [video](#) of Trump using the same profanity in a 2011 speech about China had resurfaced online.

“Nobody has heightened [partisan conflict] more than the president of the United States with the rhetoric he has used over the last two or three years,” Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.) said Friday.

Tlaib made the remarks Thursday night shortly after the House’s late-night votes, at a reception for new members sponsored by MoveOn.

She was mobbed when she arrived; an emcee had to ask the crowd to clear out the hallway, as a wave of selfie-cravers had clogged it up.

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It was a raucous event before that, with a dance floor and open bar. Earlier, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) gave some brief, uncontroversial remarks.

Dave Weigel, John Wagner and Elise Viebeck contributed to this report.

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