



JOHN BONIFAZ REMARKS FOR MAY 9, 2019

My name is John Bonifaz. I am a constitutional attorney and the co-founder and president of Free Speech For People.

We are here today on behalf of millions of Americans across the country who are demanding that Members of Congress uphold their oaths of office and confront the constitutional crisis facing the nation today.

President Donald Trump is a direct and serious threat to our Republic. On an almost daily basis, he attacks our Constitution, our democracy, and the rule of law.

The Framers of the Constitution designed the impeachment power to address such a constitutional crisis: to protect the country by removing a lawless president from the Oval Office.

We have overwhelming evidence that the president has committed impeachable offenses, including obstructing justice; violating two of the anti-corruption provisions of the US Constitution (the emoluments clauses); abusing the pardon power; undermining the freedom of the press; directing or seeking to direct law enforcement, including the Department of Justice and the FBI, to prosecute political adversaries for improper purposes; advocating illegal violence and undermining equal protection of the laws; ordering the cruel and unconstitutional imprisonment of children and their families at the southern border; abusing emergency powers to fund and build a wall on our border that Congress has explicitly refused to fund; and conspiring to illegally influence the 2016 election through a series of hush money payments.

And, now, with the release of the redacted version of the Mueller report, we know that the Trump campaign in 2016 had multiple contacts with officials linked to the Russian government while that foreign government interfered with our election, and that Donald Trump and his associates welcomed that illegal assistance and knowingly used stolen material from that foreign government to aid the Trump presidential campaign. We also know that Special Counsel Robert Mueller identified at least 10 separate acts of obstruction of justice that this president committed to interfere with and impede the federal criminal investigation into his wrongdoing. The last such act of firing Attorney General Jeff Sessions and replacing him with William Barr ended this investigation.

And, the cover-up continues. The President is now blocking Congress on all subpoenaed testimony from the executive branch. He refuses to comply with fundamental separation of powers principles. He has effectively declared himself above the law.

Members of Congress cannot run away from their constitutional duty at this critical hour for our nation. They cannot say that we must just wait for the next election. The threat to the republic is here and now.

We have heard the claims from the House leadership that there must be strong bipartisan support in order to start an impeachment inquiry and that there must be 67 votes in the Senate to convict before starting such an inquiry. If the House leadership during the Watergate era had applied that standard for the House Judiciary Committee to open an impeachment inquiry, President Richard Nixon never would have faced impeachment proceedings. The standard for opening an impeachment investigation is whether there is evidence that the president has committed crimes against the state: abuse of power and abuse of the public trust. That evidence is clearly before us today.

Now is not the time for traditional congressional oversight. Now is the time for Members of Congress to face this extraordinary moment in history, to confront this constitutional crisis threatening our nation, and to start an impeachment investigation of this president.

This is not just about Donald Trump. This is about us. Who are we as a people? What are we as a nation. With the occupant of the Oval Office shredding our Constitution, we must rise. We must rise to defend our Constitution, to defend our democracy, and to defend that bedrock principle that no one is above the law, not even the President of the United States. The time for impeachment proceedings is now.