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House of Representatives

AUTHORIZING THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER SUFFICIENT GROUNDS EXIST FOR THE IMPEACHMENT OF WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

(Continued)

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE).

(Ms. DEGETTE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, historians note that those who are in the middle of history often do not themselves recognize it. Today should not be about polls. Today should not be about the upcoming November election, and even today should not be about the serious matter of sexual misconduct. But with all due respect to my friends, that is exactly what today is all about.

This is only the third time in the history of this country that we are talking about opening impeachment proceedings against our President, and I am shocked at how many people, including some in this chamber, take this serious matter so lightly, even gleefully. We are witnessing a stampede to justice, my friends, and like so many stampedes, when the trail dust settles, we will leave chaos and we will leave ruin.

This is a time for statesmanship. Each one of us must independently assess the best direction for this House and this country, and I will say it is not an open ended, never ending, witch-hunt without any limits. We need to carefully consider the Starr report. We need to set a guideline and then we need to move forward with the serious, serious business of this country.

Mr. Speaker, the House is about to decide whether to exercise one of the most grave constitutional steps within our power: hearings concerning the impeachment of the President.

This is the most serious decision we can make, next to a declaration of war. It is legislative, moral, and civic duty to caution the House to carefully weigh this dangerous, perhaps necessary step.

Like so many of you, my political conscience was formed during the Watergate scandal and I applauded the Supreme Court's ruling in *U.S. versus Nixon* that the President "is not above the law." The President, whoever he or she may be, is not above the law.

But my political conscience was also informed by reading "Profiles in Courage," where John Kennedy, who well-knew the passions that govern partisan political discourse, discussed the failed attempt to impeach President Andrew Johnson. Johnson was saved from impeachment by the courageous actions of several senators who withstood the deep and intense partisan public hatred of a president attempting to unite a divided country. Most historians would agree that the impeachment of Johnson would have been a constitutional, economic, and political catastrophe. In fact, the partisan bickering, motivated by the hope of political advantage, was a dark, shameful moment in American history which affected the national agenda for decades afterwards; a moment we may soon repeat if we do not learn from our history.

This is the time to ask what actions will best serve our country. Hasty decisions in a mentality will not serve the interests of our constituents. Frankly, I have heard little about the long-term consequences of an impeachment hearing, especially if we ultimately decide not to impeach the President. The Watergate scandal undermined the institutional authority of our political system for a generation. Therefore, we must carefully weight what we do now, because it will have consequences for at least a generation to come. Yes, we have a President who has lied to you and me and the American public. I'm, not happy about that; I am angry and outraged. He deserves our scorn and our condemnation. But we cannot impeach him because of our anger. That would turn our constitutional democracy into a parliamentary system. I am sure my colleagues do not want to subvert the constitution in that way.

What we must determine is this: does his conduct constitute a "high crime" or a "misdemeanor"? There is a reasonable doubt about that, and reasonable people can differ on the answer.

Because ours is a legislative, not judicial, judgment, exercised as part of our legislative function, we must also determine if impeachment is in the best interests of the country.

Historians note that those who are in the middle of history often do not realize it. Today, we are not talking about polls—or even elections—or even the sexual misconduct of our President. After all, this will be only the third time in history we consider impeachment of a sitting President. But that's what this debate is really about. I am shocked at how many people, including some in this Chamber, take this serious matter so lightly, even gleefully. We are witnessing a stampede to judgment. And like many stampedes, when the trail-dust settles we may leave chaos and ruin. This is a time for statesmanship. Each of us must independently assess the best direction for the House and for the country. That is why we should vote for a thoughtful process that will establish whether evidence exists to even open an inquiry before we begin a wide-ranging witch hunt with heavy heart and a keen recognition of history, and with reluctant support for this forum.

The American people, the world community, and future historians will judge us as we judge the President. I this House, at this moment, we must rise above passion and partisanship. We must be wise and equal to the public trust.

I ask my colleagues for a full debate on the resolution to open impeachment proceedings. We need more than one hour for discussion. Because of the gravity of this vote, we owe it to the American people to have a fully informed, careful, responsible discussion.

I also ask for our best judgment. I believe that the process that allows us to have more prudent decision-making is the Democratic alternative. Before we can move forward in recommending articles of impeachment, the Judiciary Committee should determine the standards for defining impeachable offenses. That would be extremely helpful and fair in our evaluation of this issue. With this information,

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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we would be in a better position to discuss impeachment.

And I ask for a narrow scope. Impeachment hearings should examine specific, clearly stated, concrete charges. We need to give the Special Prosecutor's report complete consideration, especially after spending \$40 million to gather this information. I was not elected to Congress to waste the taxpayers' time and money in political chicanery. I was not elected to engage in a witch-hunt. The discussion must be on-point, specific to the matter-at-hand, relevant, and substantive.

This is the time for prudent judgment, for far-sighted decision-making, for fairness, and for justice. We cannot let our unharnessed passions nor our political greed sway us from acting in the country's best interests. We stand at a singular moment in history. Our actions will forever change the culture and political environment of our country. If we do not act with complete fairness, impartiality, and good judgment, we will certainly be harshly judged by our constituents, by the world community, and by history for our impatient folly. I ask my colleagues to demand a fair, just, and realistic process by which we examine these serious, dangerous, and historic charges against the President.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and I have?

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) has 20½ minutes. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) has 20 minutes.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT).

(Mr. BLUNT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 1245

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution and will submit my remarks for the RECORD.

I intend to vote for the Judiciary Committee's recommendation that would begin the inquiry for impeachment. The President of the United States needs the trust and confidence of the American people. When the President does not have credibility, the country is at risk.

Currently only one in five Americans say they have confidence in the President's credibility and truthfulness. The American people deserve a speedy resolution of this crisis-in-confidence. The President deserves the opportunity to restore his credibility by having the opportunity to explain his side of what seems to be perjury and obstruction of justice both in a civil case and before a federal grand jury.

It is my hope that this inquiry will meet the demands of the Constitution and be resolved with all deliberate speed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to do their duty under the Constitution and take this step toward a conclusion of this national challenge.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE).

(Mr. GANSKE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, we have not always agreed on certain policies. I

can think of a health care issue that we disagreed on. But I certainly do not think it is fair for the Speaker of the House to be accused of perjury in this debate today.

I think that I have some bipartisan credentials, so I want to say to Members on both sides of the aisle that the Republican resolution follows the same model that was followed in 1974. A time limit was recognized then, and it is recognized now, as a way to obstruct and delay. We must listen to our consciences. And if we do, I think we can all agree with Chairman Peter Rodino in 1974 and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) today, a time limit is not the way to go on this resolution.

Yes, I am tired of hearing about the President's indiscretions, and I have had a hard time explaining this to my 10-year-old son. And it will be a stressful time for us. But when I think about the stressful times that our country has gone through in the American Revolution, the Civil War, the two world wars, the Great Depression, I think it would be a shame for us to shirk our duty.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT), the only former sheriff in the House.

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the prosecutor has asked us to indict the President of the United States on 11 counts. All 11 counts involve an intern. In the video, in 4 hours of questioning, the prosecutor did not ask the President one time about FBI files, about the travel office, about Vincent Foster, or about Whitewater. In 4 hours, basically the prosecutor asked what did the President do with an intern, when did the President know that he did it, and did he lie about it.

I am not minimizing the gravity of this, my colleagues, but this does not rise to the level of Watergate. Now, let us be honest about that.

This prosecutor is required by law to submit all evidence to the House, which is a Grand Jury. I must assume that he has. But I would also say to the leaders of both parties, if he has not, he should be compelled today to deliver every piece of evidence he has on any pending investigation. That is our duty.

I am going to support an inquiry today, but I am not going to support an extended soap opera, my colleagues. And I will say this: What the Congress of the United States, the House, has before us today is an 11-count indictment. We should be able to act on the predicate of that substance by the end of our terms. Kenneth Starr submitted it to the 105th Congress, not to a future Congress.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. STEVE BUYER), a distinguished member of the committee.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this

time. I have listened to part of the debate, and I have to agree with the gentlewoman from Colorado that I am disappointed in the conduct of some of my colleagues here today. How people can be here on this House floor cheering or applauding, as though they have somehow scored political points, is very disappointing to me. I think that part of that noise is about a clamor against the judicial process and their actions define themselves.

Actually, this kind of reminds me of a story about Abe Lincoln that I will share with my colleagues. Let me tell this little story.

Abe Lincoln, in one of his many famous debates, was debating a person known to be very shallow in substance because he did not really have the facts on his side. He always tried to make up for his lack of substance by making a lot of noise. Sure enough, the debate began with his opponent using plenty of noise, increasing the volume of his voice and the emotion in the delivery and the intensity of the tone. Abe began, in reply, with this story:

He said: There was a man and woman that were walking back to town. It was at night, through a dense forest. It was extremely dark, and a storm, with plenty of thunder and lightning, was all around them. The lightning was not enough for them to see, and the thunder caused confusion and made it difficult for them to see. And they got scared, because they were not sure they were going to be able to make it back to town. So they fell upon their knees and they prayed. And they said, God, may we have a little less noise and a little more light.

What we find here at the moment is a lot of noise, but I, for one, will enjoin in the prayer for a little more light. Our job here is to seek the light of the truth, because the truth matters.

And let us not confuse ourselves with what is happening here today. Both parties, Democrats and Republicans, are saying to America: We have a credible and substantive referral from an independent prosecutor, and we must take the next step toward the inquiry of impeachment. There may be a disagreement, there may be a debate about the scope or the limitation on times, but those are details. The facts will sort themselves out. If the facts find that the President should be exonerated, then we should do so because we follow the truth. If it shows otherwise, then we should proceed with the next step.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. DEBBIE STABENOW).

(Ms. STABENOW asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, today we make a critically important decision affecting the lives of every single one of the people we represent: Men and women, young and old, working hard every day, who care about their families. They want us to deal with the

President's irresponsible behavior and lack of truthfulness in a fair and responsible manner, and they want us to do so as quickly as possible so that we can return to the important issues that affect their families.

They also want us to rise above partisan self-interest and do what is best for the country, not Democrats, not Republicans, but as Americans. I am deeply concerned that this Congress will not meet this test today.

We have two proposals in front of us. The issue is not whether or not to proceed, it is how to proceed. One proposal gives us the opportunity to come together in a bipartisan way, vote to begin an inquiry on the issues raised by the Starr report, and bring this inquiry to a conclusion this year. The Republican alternative is an open-ended, unchecked process that could continue throughout the next Congress, with no requirement to limit the issues formally presented by the special prosecutor.

In all good conscience, I cannot support this process. It is not in the best interest of our country. It is not in the best interest of the families I represent to put our country in suspended animation for months and months when we have the ability here to bring this to a conclusion this year. I believe the American people deserve no less.

We must address this crisis fairly and responsibly and get back to the people's business. I implore my Republican colleagues to join us, to join with America in a process we can truly be proud of.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), a valued member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

(Mr. GOODLATTE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, in a short while this House will vote on whether or not to begin an impeachment inquiry against the President of the United States. A very serious matter. We will have a vote that will, I think, result in a substantial majority of the Members voting to proceed unhindered by artificial time constraints that simply subject the body to political gamesmanship of delay rather than expedition of the process. We will vote to allow ourselves to look at other credible evidence of impeachable offenses from other credible sources, if those come before the body.

We should not engage in a fishing expedition, but we should exercise our constitutional responsibility in a full and open way, the same way we have always exercised that responsibility for every other impeachment inquiry in more than 200 years of American history. And we should do it in the way suggested by our former colleague, Representative Barbara Jordan, who said at another time, "It is reason, not passion, which must guide our deliberations, guide our debate and guide our decision."

The charges against the President include perjury, witness tampering and obstruction of justice. These are serious charges, charges that cannot be wiped away with a mere wink and a nod, an apology, or someone's interpretation of the latest opinion poll. The standard that we follow, and the standard we teach our children, is that no person is above the law, including the President of the United States.

Amid the intense glare of the moment, we must keep in mind that what the House is considering today is not impeachment or articles of impeachment, nor is it about matters for which the President has apologized. Rather, the House must decide, in light of the documented allegations of serious crimes committed by the President, all of which the President has repeatedly denied, whether we should take the next step in the constitutional process by fully and completely investigating whether the charges are well-founded.

I urge my colleagues to take that step because it is the right thing to do. We must follow the truth wherever it leads.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LLOYD DOGGETT), a former member of his State's Supreme Court.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the real question here today is not whether to begin an inquiry, but whether it will ever end. Whitewater, Travelgate, Filegate. It is really Rabbit Trail Gate that I am concerned about. We do not need Ken Starr squared in this chamber. The only way to force this Congress to get back to the real concerns of American families, like tax reform and Social Security reform, is to bring this matter to a prompt conclusion.

As a former Supreme Court Justice, I will not defend the indefensible, but, by golly, there is a way to punish the lying without punishing the American people, who have clearly had enough of this and then some.

I believe that the standard that we apply should be no higher and no lower than we would apply to ourselves and that we have applied to the Speaker of the House in this very chamber. The Democratic amendment assures that that will happen. Without it, there is no assurance of a bipartisan pursuit of justice, of fairness, and an ultimate answer to the American people on this issue, and then getting back to business on their issues.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON).

(Mr. WELDON of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if we walk out the door to my right, in the middle on the minority side, and go left, we will come to a large marble staircase. And at the top of that staircase is a large painting, a painting by Howard Chandler Christie entitled, "The Signing. The Constitution of the United States." And in the center of

that portrait is Ben Franklin. It is reported that he walked out of the Constitutional Convention and a woman approached him and said, "What kind of government have you given us, Mr. Franklin?" And his response was: "A republic, if you can keep it."

The challenge before us today is: Can we keep it? Because a republic is a Nation that is guided by the rule of law. Not the whims of a dictator or a majority that can trample on the rights of a minority, but the rule of law.

I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this resolution. I, like everyone in this chamber, would like to get this process behind us. The best way to do that is to support this resolution. It is the right thing to do, it is the right way for us to keep the republic, as Franklin asked us to do.

□ 1300

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, a former member of the Committee on the Judiciary the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) is no longer with us on the committee, but we still appreciate his legal insights. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA).

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. The President's conduct in this matter was deeply disappointing to Americans. All of us have traveled down that path. There is no question of that. This House will proceed with an inquiry. That road we have also begun to travel. There is no question of that. But how we travel down that road is still subject to intense questioning. The majority would take us down this road that would offer no end in sight, that omits the rules of the road for its conduct, in essence open-ended, without conclusion.

After more than 4 years, \$50 million in taxpayer funds, we should give the American people a clear, defined and transparent process. It is not if we will proceed, it is how we will proceed. Today is the 8th of October. We are now 8 days into the new fiscal year without a budget. Tomorrow, the 9th of October, at midnight, we will have to shut down this government unless this Congress passes a budget. And yet for the American people we offer nothing, no clear, defined, transparent process. They deserve more.

Let us go to our destination and get there with Godspeed. We have work to do for seniors, for children and for working Americans. We must do it in a transparent, balanced and fair way.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS), a very valuable member of the committee.

(Mr. GEKAS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, the simple gesture of raising one's hand accompanied by an oath to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, this gesture takes place hundreds of

times a day in every courthouse in the land. It is preceded by an oath that is taken by the judge to dispense justice, by the jurors to find the truth, by the bailiffs, by the clerk of court, by the sheriff, by the attorneys, the officers of the court. And when a witness mounts the witness stand pledging to tell the truth and nothing but the truth and does not, but commits perjury, then the entire process comes tumbling down.

The very core of the justice system on which we rely for justice for our families, for our churches, on our institutions, for the individual rights of every citizen of our country, all of that depends on that oath that is administered and followed, hopefully, by the witness who takes that stand.

We cannot afford to trivialize the possibility of perjury nor devalue its part in our democracy. That is why we must go forward with this impeachment inquiry to determine whether the statements given under oath amount to perjury, number one, and whether that perjury, no matter what the subject matter is, is an impeachable offense. This is not about sex. This is not about lying about sex. It is, rather, when under oath does one lie about sex.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, very, very few people have argued their cases in the United States Supreme Court. Eleanor Holmes Norton, our delegate from the District of Columbia, has. I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, we have witnessed astonishing confusion in this House and in the Judiciary Committee concerning the requirements for impeachment. If these very issues were before a court of law, there might be wide disagreement on the facts, but everyone would know what the law is. In an impeachment proceeding, the law is the standard the House sets. We move today, Mr. Speaker, not by any standard, but by the seat of our pants. We are a constitutional democracy, not a parliamentary republic. A vote of no confidence in Great Britain requires no standard, but calls forth a new election. A vote for an impeachment inquiry in the United States requires a high standard, because it could nullify an election.

Mr. Speaker, the President's misconduct may warrant an inquiry, but neither he nor any other American deserves an inquisition.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA).

(Mr. FOSSELLA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I come before you today to sup-

port this resolution. I come not as a Republican, not as a New Yorker, but as a person who loves this great country and all its ideals and principles it represents.

Earlier today one of my colleagues said that this would be the most divisive issue since the Vietnam War. While he may believe that to be true, I take strong exception with that, and I will tell my colleagues why. Men and women were sent overseas like every other war and military conflict since our Nation's birth to defend the rule of law, the notions of personal freedom and individual liberty. And in the case before us today, we are asking a simple question: Did the President of the United States violate any of those rules of law that we cherish and that so many men and women have died for and are willing to die for at every point around the globe?

I do not want to be here today, like so many of my colleagues, but the generations of Americans yet unborn must look back on this day and this matter and this situation and see this as our finest hour, upholding what our Founding Fathers and every generation since has looked for and yearned for, the notion of freedom, the notion of liberty, the notion of the rule of law, and that each American cherish life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Reluctantly, I am here; I proudly, though, support this resolution.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) who came to this body at the same time as I did, a distinguished lawyer in her own right.

(Mrs. MINK of Hawaii asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. Mr. Speaker, we have been beseeched today on both sides of the aisle to follow the rule of law, to follow the Constitution. I ask each of you here to understand that the seat of which you occupy in this august Chamber has a constitutional limit which expires on January 3. What right have we to extend this investigation beyond our term of office? That is all that we are saying on this side of the aisle. There must be a limit. This investigation must end by the end of the year.

We also ask you to follow those points that have been raised by the Ken Starr report, extended no further, limited to that. We also say that under the Constitution, we have to know what the rules are, exactly what is the standard of conduct which is impeachable. The Constitution says impeachable requires a definition of high crimes and misdemeanors and talks about treason and bribery.

The Judiciary Committee has not had 1 day of hearings to help this country or this Congress to understand what constitutes an impeachable offense, so how can we vote today on an inquiry which has no standards, no rules of conduct, no time limit?

The President's shameful conduct has brought humiliation to the Presidency, to his family, and to this nation. He has demeaned himself and the office to which he was elected. His conduct cannot be dismissed as a private matter. When he took office he took an oath, as we did, to uphold the law. Probably more important than that oath, is the role the President has as the moral and ethical leader of our country. What will our children think about their President? How will we answer their questions?

In that backdrop this House has now the constitutional duty to judge the facts and to make a determination whether "high crimes and misdemeanors" amounting to treason and bribery have been committed.

Despite assurances by the Republican leadership that they would be fair in setting the rules for this inquiry I have concluded that their interests are primarily partisan.

They have the votes to do whatever they wish. Ultimately the American people will be the judge of whether they were fair.

I, like most of my constituents who have called and written, would prefer that this matter be disposed of quickly. They are disgusted by the incessant media hype regarding the sexual details and just want it to be over and done with. They want to spare their children from having to hear over and over again all the lurid details of the sexual conduct. They want the jokes to cease. The quickest way would be by censure without going through a prolonged inquiry. Under this process we would assume all the narrative facts as described in the Starr report to be true and decree a punishment short of impeachment. It would be a public reprimand. It could also be a fine and forfeiture of pay or pension. Some of these were among the punishments leveled on the Speaker at the beginning of this Congress.

We have had many discussions among minority members and it seemed to me that censure was the right course of action. I regret that it could not be what we are discussing today.

The Republican majority have the votes to carry this forward to an inquiry. They want an open ended inquiry. Most of the public wants no inquiry. The public wants an end to this sordid matter. The public wants us to get back to the business of the nation.

The Democratic minority has suggested that if there must be an inquiry it be limited to the narrative contained in the Starr report and that the inquiry conclude at the end of this 105th Congress. This is a reasonable request. Why should newly elected members of the House be bound by an inquiry which they neither voted for nor participated in? The next Congress, the 106th, if the inquiry goes forward into 1999, has to elect a new Judiciary Committee and for all we know it may have many new members. The limitation to an inquiry by this Congress is both logical and practical and certainly is in keeping with the sentiment felt across this land that they want an end to this emotional debacle.

All that is before this House is the Starr report. This is all that this House and this Judiciary Committee ought to be considering. There is no justification to add other items to this impeachment inquiry. Kenneth Starr has been investigating Whitewater for the past four years at the cost of over \$40 million and has filed no report with the House. What could the Judiciary Committee accomplish that Starr has

failed to do? Filegate, Travelgate, and Chinagate are all under investigation or have been. There is no need to raise these to the level of impeachment.

If we must be saddled with an inquiry, it must be limited to the report of Kenneth Starr. The Democratic proposal is both fair, and reasonable. It should be accepted.

I shall vote against the Republican version because it leaves open the scope of this inquiry and allows it to go beyond the end of this Congress.

Furthermore, in my view the real debate we should be having in this House is what constitutes a "high crime and misdemeanor" within the meaning of the Constitution. Do the facts of this case, even if all true, warrant an impeachment? Are there judicial precedents? Unless and until we arrive to this determination, the rest of the inquiry is merely to sort out the sordid details, without even understanding whether even if true they mount to an impeachable offense.

Many of my constituents demand that I say whether I am for or against impeachment of this President. That's like asking whether I am ready to drop to guillotine without knowing whether a capital offense deserving death has been committed.

Our system of justice is difficult to understand. For instance OJ Simpson was found "not guilty" of murder because guilt had to be found "beyond a reasonable doubt." Yet in civil court where "the preponderance of evidence" rule is the guide OJ was found liable under the same facts.

Here the Constitution sets the narrow parameters of what an impeachable offense is. We must stick to that determination. First we have to agree what an impeachable offense is. Then we have to decide whether the facts at hand come up to that level of definition.

I am the jury and the judge. Even if the were pending before my court a motion to dismiss this case I would still have to decide what an impeachable offense was and whether the facts reached this definition. If it did not, I would dismiss the case.

It's the rule of law that guides my decision today. We must heed our constitutional duty. What we do will long endure.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, we are on the threshold of a very simple decision here, a simple decision to decide whether to look at and investigate the Starr report. Now, both parties in this House agree that we should investigate. The Democrats want to limit the scope and the time. But we want to follow the precedents established by Watergate.

No prior impeachment investigation has ever been limited in the United States or England in the last 600 years because of time and scope. If there is a precedent that you can cite today, please tell us. Why do we have to go forward like this? Because man believes he is above the law. In fact, Louis XIV said, "I am the State." The king expressed the essence of the doctrine of unlimited power.

In 1825, Daniel Webster in his Bunker Hill Monument oration talked about unlimited power, love of power and "long supported by the excess and abuse of it are yielding in our age to other opinions." What are those opinions? The Constitution.

So, my friends, we are at a threshold. Under our Constitution, the role of the House and our duty to the American people is to act simply as a grand jury in reference to the impeachment charges presented. To paraphrase Thomas More "A Man for All Seasons", when he said:

"The laws of this country are the great barriers that protect the citizens from the winds of evil and tyranny. If we permit one of those laws to fall, who will be able to stand in the winds that follow?"

How eloquent. How truthful. We must do the right thing and move forward with an investigative inquiry of impeachment without restrictions.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, with all apologies to my colleagues on this side of the aisle, without objection from the chairman of the committee, I would like to call on three of my colleagues for 20 seconds each consecutively: I would call on the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK), and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HEFNER) for that amount of time, if that is permissible.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I think it is ironic that I have 20 seconds. The Republican majority wants to give us no time limit on an impeachment inquiry which will turn into an open-ended fishing expedition, but I have 20 seconds here. They want to severely limit the amount of debate here amongst our colleagues.

The American people are smart. They want this politically motivated witch-hunt to end. It is no coincidence that Mr. Starr brought his report 7 weeks before a national election.

Let us stop the politics. Let us really talk about bipartisanship. Why can we not have adequate time to debate this important thing to the Nation?

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, perhaps a second and a half.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK).

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for giving me this full 20 seconds to address the American people.

It is unfair, it is unconstitutional, and it is unfortunate that we are here today. The highest office in this country, not protecting the Constitution, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HEFNER).

(Mr. HEFNER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I came here with Chairman HYDE, and we came here 24 years ago. I was hoping that I would get more than 20 seconds on this, the most important vote I have cast since I have been here. But the thing that bothers me in this whole process, and I will be leaving this august body which I love, is the hatred and the venom that this has engendered over the past year. You look at the talking heads on television, in the newscasts. There are people that are absolutely livid.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize three more persons in the same time frame as before: The gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK), the gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACCI), and the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK).

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank this Congress. I love you very much. But it is very apparent that from the very beginning you have not wanted William Jefferson Clinton as your President.

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My colleagues have gotten on a path to do it, and they are on their way.

The American people are watching. They know this process is unfair. And wherever something is unfair, there is an old saying that goodness and justice shall prevail.

So I say if my colleagues keep going, their time will come.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACCI).

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address this situation that the House of Representatives and, indeed, the country face today. I rise in support of the motion by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BOUCHER) to substitute the motion by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and to have an inquiry, but to have a focused inquiry, and one that has an expeditious end to it so that the Congress, which has an obligation to do the people's business, moves forward as quickly as possible and as fairly as possible. And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, I want to ensure that we are actively working to address the priorities of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the situation that the House of Representatives, and indeed, face today.

Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr has presented the House of Representatives with a referral and supporting documentation containing "substantial and credible information that President Clinton committed acts that may constitute grounds for an impeachment." It is now the duty of the House to determine whether or not to move forward with an impeachment "inquiry," and if so, what the scope of such an inquiry should be.

This is an important matter. What President Clinton did was wrong, and he must be punished appropriately. However, instead of rushing to judgment, I believe we should pause to consider the long-term implications of our actions. I hope that the actions of this House will stand the test of time. I am concerned that they may not.

Today, I will support an inquiry that is limited in scope to the matters contained in the Independent Counsel's referral. (Should Mr. Starr refer additional matters, I would consider expanding the scope of the inquiry to include those matters at that time.) I do not believe that a wide-ranging resolution that will result in a re-examination of unrelated issues is in the best interest of our nation. The American people have rightly demanded that this matter be settled expeditiously, and there is no reason that cannot happen.

The House must define what constitutes an impeachable offense and determine whether or not the facts before us met that definition. The potential impeachment and removal from office of a popularly elected President is a very serious matter. We must carefully consider the President's conduct, and determine whether or not it rises to the level of "high crimes and misdemeanors." As we go forward, I believe that we should explore whether another punishment, such as censure or rebuke, might be more appropriate to these circumstances. Above all, we must conduct our inquiry in a fair and deliberate manner that is worthy of the seriousness of the situation and that will not set precedents that will weaken the Office of the Presidency in the future.

Again, I support moving forward with a focused inquiry. I would encourage every member—Republican and Democrat—to support a focused inquiry that can bring this difficult situation to a close.

But I also want to recognize there are many other important matters facing our nation. Each week as I travel throughout Maine, I consistently hear from people that they are tired of reading about the Starr investigation. They want to talk about Social Security, education, health care and other issues that affect their day to day lives. The Congress has an obligation to do the people's business. I want to move this process forward as quickly and as fairly as possible. Most importantly, I want to ensure that we are actively working to address the priorities of the American people.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER.)

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, it is this Congress that is subverting the constitution by trivializing the impeachment process. Ken Starr has been 4 years and \$40 million investigating every part of the President's life, and we are going to embark on an open-ended investigation while the world economy is collapsing, the health care system needs reform, our own finance system is corrupt, and we will be talking for months about who touched who where.

The continued investigation of the President is nothing more than a cover-up for the failure of a do-nothing Congress to address the real issues facing the American people.

I am voting "no" on opening an impeachment inquiry.

Impeachment is the gravest of offenses. In the view of the framers of our Constitution, impeachment is reserved for those who undermine the fundamental political and Constitutional structure of our nation. While President Clinton's behavior was both reckless and indefensible, it is not impeachable. It is this Congress that is subverting the Constitution by trivializing the impeachment process.

Ken Starr has already spent four years and \$40 million investigating every aspect of the President's public and private life. It is irresponsible for this Congress to continue an open-ended investigation for who knows how long. The world economy is collapsing, our health care system needs major reform, our whole campaign finance system is corrupt—and we will be talking for months about who touched who where!

This continued investigation of the President is nothing more than a "coverup" for the failure of a do-nothing Congress to address the real issues facing the American people.

We must bring closure to this sorry chapter in our history as quickly as possible—so we as a nation can move on to deal with our domestic and international problems. To that end, I would urge the Congress to immediately censure the President—and begin the process of healing the breach of trust that engulfs us now.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH).

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in reluctant, but strong support of the resolution offered by the Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary.

It is disappointing to see this debate degenerate into a cacophony of cat calls.

Honest people can have honest disagreements. But I take strong exception, Mr. Speaker, to the notion that somehow this is unconstitutional. Quite the contrary. This follows the Constitution.

Incumbent upon every Member of this House today is the most important responsibility short of the responsibility of a declaration of war because we have to begin the process to determine the fitness for office of our Chief Executive.

There is no reason to let this degenerate into cat calls or into the spin cycle. Let us follow the Constitution, let us follow the procedures laid down by those who have gone before, let us not confuse the issue, trying to superimpose ethics rules of this House on the constitutional process. Vote for the inquiry of impeachment.

Mr. CONYERS. With apologies again to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds each to gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH).

Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS).

(Mr. MEEKS of New York asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, this resolution does not allow us to even set standards. When we do not have standards, what we become is a modern-day kangaroo court.

I was arrested myself the other day, and when I was arrested for the immoral practices of the Supreme Court in hiring minority law clerks, I knew that I had a right to a speedy trial. I knew the elements of the crime that were against me. That is not here.

Dr. King once said that a threat to justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

My fellow Americans, this is not about just justice for President Clinton. This is about justice for all of the American people.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH).

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, this is clearly my saddest day as a Member of this body.

As my colleagues know, we have heard a lot of protests so far, and the protest that there is no politics here. Well, know something? People are protesting that protest a little too much. It is not believable.

The reality is that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, they cannot just impeach Bill Clinton, but the truth is they can impeach a ham sandwich. That is the reality of the situation, and the American people understand it.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 40 seconds to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, there are strong beliefs on this issue on both sides. I believe strongly that many of the Republicans think and believe that this is about perjury and think it is about lying, and I think Democrats think that this is about a sexual affair. And in truth: in some ways both are right.

The question before us is whether or not we believe as a people and as a Congress that these issues rise to a impeachable offense.

President Clinton did wrong. He admitted it, he said he was sorry, he asked for our forgiveness. Let us give him our forgiveness, let him run this country, let us talk about the issues that are important to the people of this country: providing health care and education, making certain that we have a fair country, a just country, a country that looks out for the poor.

That is the challenge before the American people.

That is the challenge before the Congress.

Let us meet that challenge and put this inquiry behind us, behind the American people.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON).

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, today's vote is not about impeachment. Today's vote is about the search for truth. This is a vote that our grandchildren will ask us about many years

from now when our constituents have long forgotten us, many years from now when our terms of office have been behind us for many years. They will look up and say:

"Why did you vote the way you did?"

Mr. Speaker, I think most Members are going to rise to this occasion and not vote by the polls, not vote by the parties and certainly not by the personalities, but vote for a higher reason: that question of does truth matter? What is right? What is wrong? Are we a Nation of laws? And do we want to affirm and uphold these laws? Do we see that as our constitutional oath of office?

I believe that when the gavel is sounded, most of us, Democrats and Republicans, will affirm that we do uphold the values, that we will move towards the search for truth, not happily jumping into it, but soberly upholding our constitutional oaths of office.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I have a series of unanimous consent requests to revise and extend remarks, and I yield such time as they may consume to: the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DeLauro), the gentlewoman from Missouri (Ms. MCARTHY), the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN), the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD), the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. FURSE), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD), the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN).

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I have been denied the opportunity to join this most important constitutional debate, and I rise to announce my intention to vote against an open-ended inquiry that is bad for our families and bad for this country.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair wishes to announce that the Chair is prepared to recognize normal unanimous consent requests within the normal framework or the Chair will cut off all unanimous consent requests.

(Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution, in support of a fair process of inquiry.

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the motion to recommit House Resolution 581 so that the measure may be amended to provide a swift, fair, judicious resolution to the inquiry of whether the

referral of the Independent counsel constitutes an impeachable offense by our President.

The debate to day is not about whether to proceed with an impeachment inquiry. It is about how we should proceed. I support a responsible inquiry that will focus on the 15 findings contained in over 10,000 pages and documents provided to the Congress and the American people. Our inquiry should begin with a determination of what standard constitutes an impeachable offense, and an examination of the sufficiency of the evidence. If more evidence is needed, we can expand the inquiry. We must be sure the findings constitute impeachment.

For too long the attention of the Congress has not been focused on the needs of the American people: reforming our health care system, achieving quality education, making Social Security solvent, and restoring soundness to our global economy which faces the possibility of a serious recession in light of a world economic downturn. For the sake of the country we should complete this inquiry by the end of the year, so that we can get back to the business of the American people.

I approach this vote with a deep respect for the Constitution, the Presidency, and the Congress. It is a serious act to overturn an election. I am profoundly disturbed and disappointed by what the President has done. Impeachment is meant not to punish a President but to protect the Nation and its citizens against the abuse of power. Our actions today are more important than any one individual. This vote speaks to the essence of our democracy and the premises of our Founding Fathers. The inquiry must go forward expeditiously and free from partisanship.

I am committed to exercising sound judgment in the best interest of the citizens of my district and this great Nation.

(Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the resolution and in support of fairness, the Constitution and America.

That's not rain outside Mr. Speaker, today the Angels are crying.

Today will be a historic day, but what kind of history will we be making?

If the vote goes as it is projected to and the resolution from the Judiciary Committee is passed in its present form, then Mr. Speaker, today the elected representatives of the people will in doing so defy the people, ignore their pleas that enough is enough, and instead vote to proceed with an ignominious impeachment inquiry that is based solely on partisan politics and not in or on our common interest or that of the state.

In doing so, given the nature of the charges which do not come even close to meeting the standards for impeachment, and having refused to limit the scope or the time, or proceed in a fair manner, it is clear Mr. Speaker that the intent is to destroy President Clinton, and the Democratic chances for victory in November. It clearly has nothing to do with protecting the state.

My colleagues, I rise to say to you that what you are proposing to do will probably not destroy Bill Clinton although it may affect the election outcome, but what it will do is destroy the institution of the Presidency for future generations, it will undermine the Constitution that

is there to protect the least of us, it will destabilize the economy that so many have benefited from, it will weaken our military efforts abroad, and it will damage the integrity of this House.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Angels are crying today.

Mr. Speaker, all that the members of the Congressional Black Caucus asked for was fairness. That was not agreed to because it would have dictated that there be no inquiry at all. The Democratic caucus, knowing that a motion to proceed with the inquiry would pass, then asked for a legitimate, fair and focused process. This too is today being denied, Mr. Speaker, and in doing so it is the request of the American people that is being denied.

Today history will be made, let us proceed fairly and vote on the dictates of conscience not politics. Otherwise, I assure you, Mr. Speaker we will all regret that this day ever dawned.

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this very unfair resolution and in support of a fair resolution, the Democrat alternative.

Mr. Speaker, today, as we consider this Impeachment Inquiry Resolution, each must ask the question, what does the Constitution require of us?

Impeachment of a President is really a greater punishment of the people. When we impeach a President, we frustrate the will of the people. That is why we must consider this matter with great care and probe deeply within our own conscience.

That is why we must have standards. In the sixty impeachment proceedings since 1789, no Congress has ever impeached a President. Two Presidents have faced impeachment, Andrew Johnson, 1868, and Richard Nixon in 1974. Johnson was acquitted. Nixon resigned before trial.

The Constitution sets out what constitutes an "Impeachable Offense", as "Treason, Bribery, or other High Crimes and Misdemeanors." We must ask ourselves, do we believe this President has committed "treason," or any offense like treason?

Treason, attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government, or betraying the government into the hands of a foreign power? We must ask ourselves, can it be said that this President committed "bribery," attempting to influence the behavior of a public official?

Neither the Starr Report nor the Shippers Charges, list treason or bribery among the claimed offenses. So, what does "Other high crimes and misdemeanors," mean?

We must not substitute our personal view of an impeachable offense for the Constitution's definition. And, what of the people's business? What of education, health care, small farmers, the global economy, and Social Security? Each must ask, in seeking to do our duty with this matter, have we done our duty for the people? When this day closes, each must ask, have I moved this Nation forward? Have I met my appointed task? Have I carried out my responsibility? Have I done the deeds for which I am obliged?

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am in strong opposition to any impeachment inquiry, and hopefully we will move forward though in a fair and speedy process.

(Ms. ESHOO asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the resolution believing that in the national interest, in the national interest, that we have a brief and concise hearing.

(Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this unfair resolution.

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this undemocratic, unconstitutional resolution.

(Ms. FURSE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FURSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this unfair Republican resolution and in favor of the fair Democratic alternative.

(Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in unequivocal opposition to this unfair practice.

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Hyde resolution and in favor of the Democratic amendment.

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I stand in opposition to the Hyde resolution and in support of the Democratic alternative.

As a woman and a Democrat, I am embarrassed by the President's conduct. What he did was wrong.

The very idea of considering impeaching a duly-elected President and removing him from office is one of the most serious and weighty tasks of the U.S. Congress. Since the Independent Counsel's report was delivered to the steps of Capitol Hill, I have thoroughly and carefully reviewed the allegations. But since that day, I have also seen important constitutional questions answered with partisanship, compromise destroyed by politics, and legal discussions replaced by political attacks. The Republican leadership has allowed desire for political gain to distort this investigation, with little regard for the harm done to American families.

The mudslinging and dirt digging has gone too far and lasted too long. It has hurt our country, damaged this Congress, and harmed our families. We should be focusing on education, Social Security, and health care. Our nation cannot endure an inquiry that goes on month after month with no direction and no end in sight. Before we jump in head first, we need an exit strategy.

That is why I will vote against the Republican resolution. With no limits and no guidelines, the Republican resolution gives the majority party carte blanche to do still more dirt digging, more snooping, and more probing into personal lives and intimate details. Quite simply, the Republican investigation risks careening out-of-control and dragging our kids and our families down with it.

I will vote for the Democratic alternative proposal because it is fair, focused, and finite. While it does allow Congress to expand its investigation should new facts come to light, it first defines an impeachable offense, specifies the scope of the investigation, and establishes a concrete time frame. Without these guidelines and the time limit, we will never be able to get this ordeal behind us.

(Ms. BROWN of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise against this pre-Halloween witch-hunt.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this impeachment inquiry resolution. We have lost our senses in this Congress! This proposed inquiry is the result of a well-planned witch hunt. For years the nation has been forced to live with daily news articles aimed at discrediting the President and the First Lady. The nation is weary and the world is in crisis! We must end this insanity now!

Our Constitution is at stake; our democratic system is at stake. Will the Congress overturn the will of the people in electing our President? The report to the Congress on this matter is not about high crimes or misdemeanors against the United States of America—the only grounds for impeachment.

We do not need to waste more time on this issue. Every year 1 million more people lose health care and our education system is collapsing. This leadership refuses to address the important issues of working people, children, and the nation's oppressed. I urge my colleagues to end this nightmare now!

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. In view of the partisan, arbitrary and capricious limitation of time, I rise in opposition to the Republican proposal that limits time but does not limit scope.

(Mr. BENTSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, the issue before the House of Representatives today is not whether the President's behavior should be condoned, nor is it whether the House should proceed with an inquiry to determine if this behavior amounts to an impeachable offense. I believe that the President's behavior was wrong and indefensible, and I believe an inquiry is necessary. The question before us today is what form this inquiry should take. Should it be an open-ended process as provided in the underlying motion H. Res. 581 that allows the Judiciary Committee to investigate anything it wants for as long as it wants, as this resolution would authorize, or should the inquiry be limited in scope to the allegations contained in the Independent Counsel's referral and brought to resolution by the end of the year, as the Boucher motion to recommit would do?

Today, I am voting for the motion to recommit because I believe the House should fully and fairly investigate this matter, but also bring it to a conclusion so we can move on and address the critical challenges facing our nation, including the most serious international economic crisis in half a century. If the motion to recommit were adopted, we could immediately begin with an in-depth inquiry into the referral of the Independent Counsel. The nation cannot afford, and the American people do not want, an open-ended, boundless, limitless inquiry as contained in the Hyde resolution that would consume all the time and energy of our nation's leaders. How long will this resolution go on? One year, two years? I fear the Congress will get little, if anything, done if we reject the Boucher motion and adopt the Hyde motion, as underscored by the recent track record of inaction on the budget, the Patients Bill of Rights, recapitalization of the International Monetary Fund, and other critical issues. My constituents tell me that they want this matter resolved quickly and fairly, and that is what I am voting to do today.

The resolution I am voting for today fulfills the House's obligations under the Constitution and the Independent Counsel law. It establishes a process by which the Judiciary Committee would first thoroughly and comprehensively review the constitutional standard for impeachment of the President. If the Committee determined that the Independent Counsel's referral could constitute grounds for impeachment, the Committee would then move to an inquiry stage in which it would fully and completely determine whether to recommend to the House that grounds exist for the House to exercise its constitutional power to impeach the President. If the Committee did not recommend impeachment to the House, this resolution would allow the Judiciary Committee to consider alternative sanctions or to recommend no action at all. It is also important to note that this resolution, while limiting the scope of the current inquiry to the Independent Counsel's referral, recognizes that the House would have to consider—as required under the Independent Counsel statute—any additional referral subsequently forwarded by the Office of the Independent Counsel. In short, this resolution neither forecloses a broader inquiry should one be warranted, nor does it presume that one may be needed, as the majority's resolution would do.

That said, I believe it is terribly important, given the circumstances, that Congress should seek to determine whether there is serious injury to the system of Government. But this does not mean that we should have an open ended inquisition. The alternative resolution does not preclude investigating other matters when they are referred. It only means that for now, we should investigate what Judge Starr has referred to the Congress and proceed expeditiously and, above all, fairly.

Mr. Speaker, we should remember that the Framers of the Constitution did not see impeachment as punishment. Impeachment is a vehicle by which to remove a threat to the nation's laws and to restore its political and legal health. We cannot let our collective anger get in the way of our official duties to the nation. If it is our anger that we want to express, we have several options and we can debate those at a later date. But we have a very serious

and terribly important duty to uphold and defend the Constitution, not only from foreign enemies, but from our own destructive impulses as well.

Before we proceed with this inquiry, we should determine what, in fact, constitutes an impeachable offense. Determining what are impeachable offenses will help the Congress to expedite this inquiry. Also, if evidence exists that warrants impeachment, we will be able to build the strongest case possible against the President. No President, today or in the future, should be impeached on accusations that amount to death by a thousand cuts. Rather, he should be impeached on the most serious, most tragic misconduct against the state.

The consequences of wringing our collective hands over this issue for the remainder of the Clinton Presidency are enormous and dire. First, the international financial crisis that has ravaged economies in Asia, Russia, and South America is slowly making its way to our borders. This crisis has produced consequences not seen in 65 years, since the Great Depression: deflation, mass unemployment, and currency devaluations. We should be working to fix the problems associated with unregulated capital markets. Second, there are a host of foreign policy challenges that we are not addressing as a result of our attention to this issue—in Kosovo, the Middle East, North Korea, and Iraq.

Above all, whatever action we take must stand the test of time. History will not shine brightly on the 105th Congress if we are wrong about how we proceed. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the alternative motion, to authorize an immediate inquiry by the Judiciary Committee into the Starr referral and report back its findings and recommended actions no later than December 31, 1998 so that we may put this sordid chapter of American History behind us and continue to move the nation forward.

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Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue with apologies to recognize my colleagues on this side for 20 seconds each: The son of our friend HAROLD FORD, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FORD, Jr.), the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH), the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY).

Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FORD).

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, some of my colleague on that side of the aisle do not like our President. Some of my colleagues on this side of the aisle may not like the Speaker. Some of my colleagues on that side of the aisle may not like other colleagues of theirs, and those on this side the same.

But that does not give us the grounds to launch an impeachment inquiry. Let us do the fair thing, I say to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE). Let us do the right thing.

We all want an inquiry. We all think it is the fair thing to do. But put some time limits, some scope limits. Do the right thing for America. We did it for the Speaker. Do it for this President.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH).

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I think that we all should understand that the American public are not just going to be mere spectators in this masquerade, since we are getting close to Hal-loween, I guess we want to get there earlier, of a legitimate inquiry.

This Congress has conducted dozens upon dozens of investigations of Bill Clinton and his administration. Not one of them would any objective person say has been fair or nonpartisan, and this will not be. But if we got to impeach this President or force him from office, there will be economic consequences for the American people. Let them in on this big secret that they will not just be spectators if we carry on with this charade.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY).

(Mr. TIERNEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on the Judiciary was asked on September 11 to review the communication received on September 9 to determine whether sufficient grounds exist to recommend to the House that an impeachment inquiry be commenced. We did not ask to go beyond what was in that report, but this is what the other party seeks to do.

We asked them to define the standard of what was an impeachable offense and measure against that what was in that report, and they have not done that on the committee. This was to be done before we got here today. We now need a fair process, Mr. Speaker. Let us hope we can get on with that type of process.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN).

(Mr. GREEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the open ended investigation and support a limited one.

Mr. Speaker, the overturning of an election in a democracy should not be taken lightly. Our country's history in presidential impeachment inquiries is limited due to the seriousness of overturning an election.

The President's conduct cannot be defended, and I have not done so. Like most Americans, I believed the President last January when he misled and lied to us. I was disappointed with the President's behavior and I will not defend his actions.

The House Judiciary Committee has recommended the beginning of an inquiry into impeachment of the President. This resolution is not limited in scope or time. The Independent Counsel's office has submitted one report based on the Lewinsky allegations while the Judiciary Committee, on a partisan vote, wants an inquiry that is broad-based and not limited in time. We should provide limits to any inquiry that potentially will overturn an election.

One of our founding fathers, George Mason, said that the phrase "high crimes and misdemeanors" refers to presidential actions that are great and dangerous offenses, or attempts

to subvert the Constitution." Alexander Hamilton, in the Federalist Paper Number 65, wrote that "Impeachable offenses relate chiefly to injuries done immediately to society itself." An impeachment should only be undertaken for serious abuse of official power or a serious breach of official duties. The impeachment process should never be used as a legislative vote of no confidence on the President's conduct or policies.

This week I had the opportunity to listen to many constitutional scholars. Attached is a letter from some of them that provides the basis to oppose an unlimited inquiry.

OCTOBER 2, 1998.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,

Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Did President Clinton commit "high Crimes and Misdemeanors" for which he may properly be impeached? We, the undersigned professors of law, believe that the misconduct alleged in the Independent Counsel's report does not cross that threshold.

We write neither as Democrats nor as Republicans. Some of us believe that the President has acted disgracefully, some that the Independent Counsel has. This letter has nothing to do with any such judgments. Rather, it expresses the one judgment on which we all agree: that the Independent Counsel's report does not make a case for presidential impeachment.

No existing judicial precedents bind Congress's determination of the meaning of "high Crimes and Misdemeanors." But it is clear that Members of Congress would violate their constitutional responsibilities if they sought to impeach and remove the President merely for conduct of which they disapproved.

The President's independence from Congress is fundamental to the American structure of government. It is essential to the separation of powers. It is essential to the President's ability to discharge such constitutional duties as vetoing legislation that he considers contrary to the nation's interests. And it is essential to governance whenever the White House belongs to a party different from that which controls the Capitol. The lower the threshold for impeachment, the weaker the President. If the President could be removed for any conduct of which Congress disapproved, this fundamental element of our democracy—the President's independence from Congress—would be destroyed.

It is not enough, therefore, that Congress strongly disapprove of the President's conduct. Under the Constitution, the President cannot be impeached unless he has committed "Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors."

Some of the charges laid out in the Independent Counsel's report fall so far short of this high standard that they strain good sense; for example, the charge that the President repeatedly declined to testify voluntarily or pressed a debatable privilege claim that was later judicially rejected. These "offenses" are not remotely impeachable. With respect, however, to other allegations, the report requires careful consideration of the kind of misconduct that renders a President constitutionally unfit to remain in office.

Neither history nor legal definitions provide a precise list of high crimes and misdemeanors. Reasonable people have differed in interpreting these words. We believe that the proper interpretation of the Impeachment Clause must begin by recognizing treason and bribery as core or paradigmatic instances, from which the meaning of "other high Crimes and Misdemeanors" is to be extrapolated. The constitutional standard for

impeachment would be very different if, instead of treason and bribery, different offenses had been specified. The clause does not read, "Arson, Larceny, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors," implying that any significant crime might be an impeachable offense. Nor does it read, "misleading the People, Breach of Campaign Promises, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors," implying that any serious violation of public confidence might be impeachable. Nor does it read, "Adultery, Fornication, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors," implying that any conduct deemed to reveal serious moral lapses might be an impeachable offense.

When a President commits treason, he exercises his executive powers, or uses information obtained by virtue of his executive powers, deliberately to aid an enemy. When a President is bribed, he exercises or offers to exercise his executive powers in exchange for corrupt gain. Both acts involve the criminal exercise of presidential powers, converting those awful powers into an instrument either of enemy interests or of purely personal gain. We believe that the critical, distinctive feature of treason and bribery is grossly derelict exercise of official power (or, in the case of bribery to obtain or retain office, gross criminality in the pursuit of official power). Nonindictable conduct might rise to this level. For example, a President might be properly impeached if, as a result of drunkenness, he recklessly and repeatedly misused executive authority.

The misconduct of which the President is accused does not involve the derelict exercise of executive powers. Most of this misconduct does not involve the exercise of executive powers at all. If the President committed perjury regarding his sexual conduct, this perjury involved no exercise of presidential power as such. If he concealed evidence, this misdeed too involved no exercise of executive authority. By contrast, if he sought wrongfully to place someone in a job at the Pentagon, or lied to subordinates hoping they would repeat his false statements, these acts could have involved a wrongful use of presidential influence, but we cannot believe that the President's alleged conduct of this nature amounts to the grossly derelict exercise of executive power sufficient for impeachment.

Perjury and obstructing justice can without doubt be impeachable offenses. A President who corruptly used the Federal Bureau of Investigation to obstruct an investigation would have criminally exercised his presidential powers. Moreover, covering up a crime furthers or aids the underlying crime. Thus a President who committed perjury to cover up his subordinates' criminal exercise of executive authority would also have committed an impeachable offense. But if the underlying offense were adultery, calling the President to testify could not create an offense justifying impeachment where there was none before.

It goes without saying that lying under oath is a serious offense. But even if the House of Representatives had the constitutional authority to impeach for any instance of perjury or obstruction of justice, a responsible House would not exercise this awesome power on the facts alleged in this case. The House's power to impeach, like a prosecutor's power to indict, is discretionary. This power must be exercised not for partisan advantage, but only when circumstances genuinely justify the enormous price the nation will pay in governance and stature if its President is put through a long, public, voyeuristic trial. The American people understand this price. They demonstrate the political wisdom that has held the Constitution in place for two centuries when, even after

the publication of Mr. Starr's report, with all its extraordinary revelations, they oppose impeachment for the offenses alleged therein.

We do not say that a "private" crime could never be so heinous as to warrant impeachment. Thus Congress might responsibly determine that a President who had committed murder must be in prison, not in office. An individual who by the law of the land cannot be permitted to remain at large, need not be permitted to remain President. But if certain crimes demand immediate removal of a President from office because of their unspeakable heinousness, the offenses alleged against the President in the Independent Counsel's referral are not among them. Short of heinous criminality, impeachment demands convincing evidence of grossly derelict exercise of official authority. In our judgment, Mr. Starr's report contains no such evidence.

Sincerely,
Jed Rubinfeld, Professor of Law, Yale University.

Bruce Ackerman, Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science, Yale University.
Akhil Reed Amar, Southmayd Professor of Law, Yale University.

Susan Bloch, Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center.

Paul D. Carrington, Harry R. Chadwick Sr. Professor of Law, Duke University School of Law.

John Hart Ely, Richard A. Hausler Professor of Law, University of Miami School of Law.

Susan Estrich, Robert Kingsley Professor of Law and Political Science, University of Southern California.

John E. Nowak, David C. Baum Professor of Law, University of Illinois College of Law.
Judith Resnik, Arthur L. Liman Professor, Yale Law School.

Christopher Schroeder, Professor of Law, Duke University School of Law.

Suzanne Sherry, Earl R. Larson Professor of Law, University of Minnesota Law School.
Geoffrey R. Stone, Harry Kalven, Jr. Dist. Serv. Professor & Provost, University of Chicago Law School.

Laurence H. Tribe, Tyler Professor of Constitution Law, Harvard University Law School.

Note: Institutional affiliations for purposes of identification only.

I urge a yes vote for a limited and specific inquiry and a no vote on the open-ended, partisan Judiciary Committee inquiry. Our nation is more important than an individual or political party.

THE SPEAKER. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) has 8¼ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), then I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. CLEMENT), then I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), our deputy whip of the House, if you please.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, the people of the United States are wise and fair. They understand that the President's conduct, the President's lies, the President's behavior was wrong and immoral and reprehensible. But they are wise.

I want to appeal to my colleagues as a woman, as a mother, as a grandmother, and as a lawmaker, let us have a formal rebuke of this behavior, but then let us move forward in this House, because I want to make it very clear that we believe it is immoral not to be rebuilding our schools, not to be taking care of our children, not it be focusing on health care, and not to preserve Social Security and Medicare.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. CLEMENT).

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States has the toughest job on the face of the earth. We cannot indefinitely keep this open and keep it going into next year. The economy is at stake; we know that. The economy is unraveling now; we know that. How can we neglect it?

We also know there are a lot of regional and ethnic problems in this world. We need to focus on that. We do not need to be preoccupied with Monica or anything else. We need to get on with the business at hand. Let us move forward.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 20 seconds to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, we should be standing here debating the future of Social Security. We should be standing here debating health care. We should be standing here debating education for our children and how we can protect the environment.

Instead, we are participating in a political charade. Republicans want to do what they could not do in an election, defeat Bill Clinton. I have news for my colleagues, the American people are watching. Beware the wrath of the American people, Mr. Speaker, beware.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mrs. BONO).

Mrs. BONO. Mr. Speaker, I am going to start with a personal story. People constantly ask me where do I get the strength to be a Member of Congress at this difficult time in my life. I have to tell my colleagues that the strength boils down to a day in Lake Tahoe still. I had to kneel down before my two children, Cesare and Chianna, and tell them about the death of their father. While they looked at me, it was through their eyes that they gave me the strength that I needed to go on and do the right thing.

I think it is now the time that we, perhaps, look at all of our children's eyes. Look at their eyes for the strength that we need to go forward and to do the right thing.

This is about the truth, and it is about the Constitution. But the Constitution is based upon truth. I think all of this perhaps is nothing more than the noise of we are being dragged and kicking our way to the truth. That is what it is about is the truth.

I do believe that once we get to the truth, all of this will converge, Democrats, Republicans, the spin in fact,

polling data, and reality. It will all converge. When we have that, perhaps this will end up being nothing more than the sound that is made when a leader falls off of his pedestal. Perhaps it will be a lot more than that.

But I say the only way we can get to this quickly is to vote for the Committee on the Judiciary resolution and put this work behind us.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL).

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, in the beginning I want to make two things clear. First I do not defend the President's actions in the Lewinsky matter. He says they are wrong, I agree. Second, the matter of the impeachment process must be conducted in a manner which is fair, expeditious, and completely open.

Do these proceedings offered us in the Republican proposal meet these tests? Clearly, No.

In less than one hour Democrats are supposed to be able to discuss questions which rank in Constitutional importance with the declaration of war—the impeachment of a President and setting aside a presidential election, in which the people chose their President is before us.

We function under a gag rule. We are denied opportunity for the people to have this matter properly discussed in their Congress.

In one hour Minority members are to discuss a great Constitutional question, impeachment of a President—unlimited time to be spent on an investigation, unlimited personnel to be deployed, no limits as to money to be spent, no limits on the breadth and sweep of the investigation. All to be done under a gag rule!

At issue here is not whether the House will convene an impeachment proceeding. Before us is whether it will be fair, open and expeditious.

We have the referral of Mr. Starr. In that document he says he has put forward all information then available to justify impeachment.

I note Mr. Starr has spent over four years, forty million dollars, the time of scores and possibly hundreds of Federal law enforcement officers and other government employees and the full authority of the Federal Government.

I also note that another prior Special Prosecutor, Starr's predecessor, spent two years and \$20 million, and found no wrong doing.

Mr. Starr, then, finds, after prodigious effort and expenditure of funds, the substance reported in his referral.

There he finds nothing now, except improper sexual activity, on which he reports in extensive, and in nauseating detail.

I insisted that all this be published in full, since it is regrettably the people's business.

If you listen to the people, they are telling you they want the matter brought to a speedy end.

It can be ended speedily, and it should be. It will not take more than until year's end to go thoroughly into the full of Mr. Starr's referral, in whatever detail the Judiciary Committee wishes.

If they find more, or wish to inquire further, the Judiciary Committee can return and with

proper request procure such additional authority as they require to carry out their function. No one will gainsay them.

I have supported this inquiry until now. I believe such inquiry should go forward, properly.

I do not however believe we should have an unlimited inquiry, without constraints, and with an unlimited budget.

The Republican resolution authorizes a partisan witch hunt, not a responsible inquiry.

Vote against the partisan Republican resolution, vote for the Minority's resolution for a proper inquiry. It is fair, expeditious and open.

The people are watching.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

(Mr. STENHOLM asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of and encourage bipartisan support of both the motion to recommit and final passage.

In spite of the countless words which already have been spoken and written about the vote before us today, I feel compelled to clarify what this vote is and what it is not.

First, this is not a vote about guilt or innocence, primarily of President Clinton or, as some have recommended, of Kenneth Starr. While Members cannot be expected to be void of personal opinion, I believe those who already have made public declarations of guilt or innocence in this case have been both premature and negligent in their constitutional responsibilities.

Second, this is not a vote about punishment or the specific punishment of impeachment. Unfortunately, the media frenzy about this action has confused many citizens who believe the House is voting today for or against impeachment. We are not. At this point, it is entirely unpredictable what the ultimate outcome of this process will be. What is clear is that the Constitutional standard of impeachable offenses is a high and serious one.

Third, this vote is not about the election coming up in less than four weeks. I have been amused by reporters quizzing me in the past week about the degree to which political concerns enter into my votes today. I would like to know how they think any vote has a political advantage in a District, such as mine, which is split right down the middle on each question of impeachment, resignation, censure or discontinued all action. No, my votes today are not about politics and reelection.

What we are voting on is of the highest, most serious nature. We must cast votes which can stand through time, votes which we can defend today, next week, next year, and for the rest of our lives. Every member must not only feel free to vote his or her conscience, as has been mentioned several times today, but they must feel obligated to do so.

For me, that means doing all that I can to create an environment of fairness, justice, and stability for our Country. That is why I am supporting the motions which allow us to move forward toward those goals.

While my constituents have differing opinions about what should happen next in this process, they are united in one desire: to have this unfortunate episode moved out of the present preoccupation and into past history. I believe that as a Nation we will not be able to move on to other pressing issues until we

have properly cleared the air, until Constitutional scholars have dissected and debated the Constitutional questions, until Members have been given a chance to evaluate the merits of various responses, and until the public has confidence that fairness and justice has been served.

I am proud of my party for working together to construct a motion which addresses concerns I had about the earlier motion. The scope has been expanded to permit additional referrals from the Independent Counsel, a critical amendment in my opinion. Second, while accepting the reasonable end-of-the-year time goal already suggested by Chairman HYDE, the Democratic motion also acknowledges the limitations of one Congress mandating behavior by a subsequent Congress. Further, the motion expressly states that if the Judiciary Committee is unable to complete its assignment within this time frame, a report requesting an extension of time will be in order. Thus, there is no arbitrary time limit included in this motion.

But knowing that as the minority party this motion is unlikely to prevail today, I am also prepared to vote for the base motion which can pass and allow our Nation to progress to the next necessary step of the process which will allow healing to begin. This resolution provides the Judiciary Committee with a great deal of authority but a great deal of responsibility as well.

I offer my vote in good faith, taking the gentleman from Illinois, Chairman HYDE, at his word. By doing so as a minority Member, I believe that I can serve to help keep this process honest. Having shown my good faith by this vote, I also stand alert to object loudly if the process is then abused with partisan gamesmanship. Such abuse, by either side, has no place in this matter.

I support both of the motions before us today and encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do likewise.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. VENTO).

(Mr. VENTO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I support the motion to recommit, and I am opposed to the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, today's debate and the decision to move ahead with an inquiry of impeachment is a decision that we must address and which has taken four long weeks to make its way to the House Floor. Personally, I am deeply saddened by the President's conduct, but it is time for us to get on with the task. Looking into the details of the President's personal life is not an issue with which Congress should need to be involved. This is a view that many of our constituents share. We have heard and read too much on this matter. We know what we need to know, perhaps even more than we should know with regards to some details. It is time to move forward as expeditiously as possible so that we can return to the business of our nation and the people's concerns.

While we debate this resolution and move forward with an inquiry, other pressing matters that affect the everyday lives of our constituents go unanswered. Today, at this late date, the federal government is operating without a

budget; funding legislation for most government agencies and programs remains in a Congressional gridlock; the President's initiative to improve our children's education by lowering classroom size is ignored; the tobacco settlement is blocked by special interests; and there is no time to address the growing health care crisis, the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of seniors from HMOs, and the HMOs' continued high handed policies that short change consumers and dictate to doctor and patient alike. About the only issues that the House seems to have time for are more investigations of the President and election year posturing for special interest tax breaks and anti-environmental riders. It is time for this House to move forward and address the issues that matter, helping the American people to help themselves.

I support the Democratic alternative to conduct the inquiry. This Democratic alternative limits the scope of the inquiry to the report submitted by Mr. Starr and establishes a workable time frame, requiring Committee action to be completed by the end of December. The Office of Independent Counsel (OIC) issued a report on September 11 with specific allegations. We are compelled to review this report and the supporting documentation to determine their validity. What we must not do is to adapt a resolution of inquiry which will hand over the O.I.C. the ability to superimpose the Starr agenda of continual referrals upon this House essentially subverting the Legislative Branch controlling the work and agenda of Congress to their end, the people's house controlled.

This Democratic alternative is a sound and fair framework which sets out an orderly process to assess whether the allegations meet the test of the Constitution first, and then and only then to proceed to determine the validity of such allegations.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are divided about what steps should be taken on this matter. Some have called for the impeachment of the President, others favor censure, while still others believe that the President's personal life should not be the concern of Congress or the OIC. Regardless of their views, however, the American people want this issue resolved and put behind us as quickly as possible. The Democratic alternative best meets that goal by establishing the proper scope and time frame to bring this matter to a deliberate and orderly conclusion.

Consideration of any impeachment resolution or inquiry is a serious matter. It is a Constitutional responsibility which I take very seriously. However, acting responsibly should not be equated with an open-ended, unfocused inquiry. The information that supposedly justifies this inquiry has been submitted by the OIC and is already available to the Committee and to the House. Requiring the Judiciary Committee to act by the end of November is a responsible time frame which allows more than enough time to consider the charges and to make a final recommendation. If new information comes to light or more time is required, that request could be accommodated at that point in time.

Any inquiry should be focused solely on the matters already submitted by Independent Counsel Starr. Mr. Starr and his staff had over 4½ years and \$44 million to investigate virtually every aspect of the President's life and to track down every rumor in Washington,

D.C., Arkansas and who knows where else. The result of that exhaustive investigation is the Independent Counsel's report and the boxes and boxes of information that he has submitted to the House. The extraordinary report, which repeatedly and redundantly outlines the allegations in vivid detail, has been publicly available for a month and spread across the land.

This report should be the sum and substance of our focus. The OIC report is where the matter should end and not be the opening for an impeachment inquiry that rehashes every House investigation and every rumor spread over the past six years of the President's term. In itself, the OIC report justifies this limitation. If after nearly five years and \$45 million, the OIC did not forward the information to the House, it should not now be raised. Nor should Mr. Starr put this nation through endless impeachment inquiries and debate with each new focus or chapter in his investigation, stringing this matter out even further. Starr has had an opportunity to put his best case forward to Congress and the American people this September. The Starr Report, in all its explicit detail, was regrettably made public without Congress even screening the material and without giving the President an opportunity to respond. It is now time for Congress to act and with such action the Starr investigation of the President should come to a close. The American people want and deserve a break from this constant drum beat of investigations and leaks. This Congressional House, the People's Body, should get back to the business which the people sent us to address.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the claim today of non-partisan conduct is laudable but actions speak louder than words. This resolution leads this House down a path of partisan inquiry and hearings, no limits on the topics or scope, no time or date to complete. Good intentions and claims of good faith should be backed up with text and within context.

Justice delayed is justice denied and this House has a responsibility to make a decision, but today the rule of law is being abused and twisted to serve as a Republican spring board to persecute not pursue facts and conclude, but rather partisan advantage. Certainly this inquiry need not be conducted this way. Fairness, focus, deliberation and expeditious action ought to be our goal and guide, to get to work and get on with it, not to dribble out and follow every rumor over the next year. The House should demand that the Starr report and allegations put up their best case now or shut down this five year inquisitionlike process. The formula we have in this motion is proposition to make no decision, it makes me wonder whether the President's accusers have the courage of their conviction to actually vote for a process that will lead to a result or just procrastinate and duck the issue waiting.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. KENNELLY).

(Mrs. KENNELLY of Connecticut asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KENNELLY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I am against the open-ended high resolution.

Today I will vote for the Democratic alternative because it will allow us an orderly and

efficient process for evaluating the Starr Report. I will vote against the Republican proposal because it will provide the opposite—a lengthy, time-consuming, open-ended investigation that I do not think is in the best interest of the country.

All of us—members of this House and the public in general—know, basically, the facts of this situation. We understand what has happened, we may know, frankly, even more than we might wish. We have an obligation to consider the facts and to handle the issue. Dealing with the information already before us and coming to a conclusion by the end of this year seems completely reasonable to me.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY).

(Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this never-ending impeachment inquiry resolution.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY).

(Mr. GALLEGLY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I, without pleasure, rise today in support of the resolution.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 581.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR).

(Mr. FARR of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

(Mr. FARR of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA).

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the majority resolution.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI).

(Mr. LIPINSKI asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, today, I will vote to start the formal inquiry into whether President Clinton should be impeached. The President's relationship with Monica Lewinsky was shameful, humiliating, and immoral, and his lying to the American people was deplorable and reprehensible. His

dishonesty created a breach of trust between the President and the American people, which I believe calls into question his ability to be an effective leader.

The President's alleged actions in trying to conceal the Monica Lewinsky affair may constitute an obstruction of justice. In addition, his deposition in the Paula Jones case, along with his testimony before the federal grand jury, may be construed as perjury.

There is enough evidence before us now that cannot be ignored. As Americans, we owe it to our constitutional government to move ahead with a full scale investigation that will ultimately be judged by the American people. We may be weary of this entire affair, but we have a responsibility to do our job as the Founding Fathers would have wanted us to. Laws may be broken and to ignore such possible transgressions is a crime against our constitution. This matter should be fully investigated by Congress and the American people.

There is no doubt this is a serious matter and a very difficult decision that should not be based on politics. This rises above partisan politics. This is about doing the right thing for our Republic.

For these reasons, I believe a thorough and complete investigation not limited by time and scope should be entered into by the House of Representatives.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO).

(Mr. COSTELLO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, the House today undertakes one of the most serious deliberations facing this Congress—whether to proceed with a process to impeach President Clinton. The report issued to this Congress by Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr—and the thousands of pages of additional documents containing related information—have provided Members of Congress with an opportunity to review the actions taken by the President and make an initial judgment.

There is information in the Starr Report that is very disturbing. I am greatly disappointed in the President's behavior and his affair with Monica Lewinsky. He has misled the American people by at first denying the affair and then admitting his transgressions. He has misled his family and the people who work for him by having them defend his denials. He has brought tremendous shame on the Presidency and the White House.

As disappointed as I am with President Clinton, I am also disappointed and disturbed by the conduct of the Independent Counsel, Kenneth Starr. I believe his investigation has produced leaks to the media which under our grand jury secrecy laws are illegal. I believe his investigators have intimidated witnesses and used questionable tactics to obtain information. Finally, his report is replete with salacious and unnecessary information that have disgusted the American people. I believe much of his investigation has been aimed only at embarrassing and weakening the President.

The question facing this Congress is whether the President's affairs with Monica Lewinsky merits his impeachment. The Independent Counsel has spent almost five years and \$50 million investigating the President. He has included what he believes to be the most serious allegations in his report; I have read this report: I have read the rebuttal of the White House and I have examined other relevant information sent to Congress by Kenneth Starr.

I have come to the judgment that the House should proceed with an impeachment inquiry but within a specific, limited amount of time. The Judiciary Committee has before it the product of the Independent Counsel. The Members of the Committee can finish their work and come to a judgment by the end of this year. If it means the Members of the House have to come back after Election Day to vote on a resolution of impeachment, then that is our duty.

I intend to vote for such a motion today on the House floor, and against the Hyde Resolution offered by the Republican Majority. The Republicans have crafted a resolution which includes no time limits, no boundaries, no scope. If their resolution is passed, we are looking at months and perhaps years of further investigation. In their partisan attempt to embarrass the President and make this an election issue, they have refused to allow an alternative to their resolution and permit only two hours of debate. It is an insult to our democratic process. Mr. Speaker, this investigation will become more partisan and political as time goes on.

There is much at stake as we consider this inquiry. We are facing a global fiscal crisis, a potential conflict in Central Europe involving Serbia and Albania, and continued problems here at home. The world is anticipating the leadership only America can provide. Are we prepared to squander the political prowess and leadership of the United States of America to further investigate the President's extramarital affair? Will millions of American continue to live in poverty and without health insurance as Congress wastes millions on more Lewinsky hearings?

Mr. Speaker, it is time to bring this investigation to a close. The American people want us to weigh the evidence presented in the Starr Report, allow the Judiciary Committee to go ahead and make a judgment by the end of the year, and recommend a decision to the full House. The House should then vote and get this matter behind us, so we can turn as a nation to address those other issues which are calling out for our focused leadership. That is why I intend to vote to reject the open-ended Republican resolution, and for the motion to set specific time limits and scope so we as a nation can bring this matter to an end.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

(Mr. KIND asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the resolution offered by Mr. HYDE to begin an inquiry into allegations against the President of the United States. This decision does not come easily, but I believe that it is in the best interest of our nation. It is time to bring closure to this painful time in our history by conducting an open, fair and bipartisan in-

quiry to determine the facts in this case. Passage of the resolution will put in place a process to resolve this matter and allow Congress to move on and deal with the more pressing issues of the Country.

I am not entirely pleased with the resolution we have before us. I would like to see some time limits placed on the hearing so this matter does not drag out for an extended period of time. That is why I also support the Democratic amendment which places reasonable time limits on the process while allowing for an extension of the inquiry if new information is presented or it becomes clear that more time is needed to conduct a thorough hearing. There comes a time, however, when we must rely on the promises of members who are leading this effort. Chairman HYDE has promised that he will make every effort to finish this inquiry before the end of this year. Chairman HYDE is a man of great integrity and I am placing my trust in him and his commitment to conduct this inquiry in a fair, non-partisan and quick manner.

With passage of this resolution, we are embarking upon a very important Constitutional exercise that has seldom been used before. This is one of the greatest Constitutional responsibilities that members of Congress face. We must determine whether the conduct of the President rises to the level to justify removal from office and the paralyzation of our country for an extended period of time.

As a former prosecutor, I've placed my faith and trust in the law and the due process of law. We have a process in our Constitution which allow the Judiciary Committee to conduct an inquiry about allegations which may rise to an impeachable offense. I am willing to give the majority party, at this time, the benefit of the doubt that they can conduct this inquiry in a fair, quick and non-partisan manner. I believe that if we are going to have any credible closure to this investigation, it has to happen in a bipartisan manner.

My hope is based on the fact that when we begin this extremely important Constitutional responsibility, all members will make decisions based on what they feel are in the best interests of this country and for future generations rather than short term partisan gain. That is what the American people expect us to do.

The American people will decide the fate of this President, and, ultimately, they will be the judge and jury of the process we are about to embark upon. The authors of the Constitution placed the power of impeachment in the House of Representatives because it is the "people's House". Members of Congress must have the support of the public before we take action to overturn a national election.

I support this resolution with the confidence that Chairman HYDE will keep to his promise of conducting a fair, non-partisan and quick inquiry. Not only is the integrity and credibility of the Presidency at stake, but so is the integrity and credibility of the U.S. Congress. In the final analysis, our children and grandchildren will know, years from now, whether we did our Constitution and this great nation proud.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER).

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I object that all Members of the House were not given enough time to speak.

CALL OF THE HOUSE

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I move a call of the House.

A call of the House was ordered.

The call was taken by electronic device, and the following Members responded to their names:

[Roll No. 496]

Abercrombie	Cubin	Hefner
Ackerman	Cummings	Herger
Aderholt	Cunningham	Hill
Allen	Danner	Hilleary
Andrews	Davis (FL)	Hilliard
Archer	Davis (IL)	Hinchey
Armey	Davis (VA)	Hinojosa
Bachus	Deal	Hobson
Baesler	DeFazio	Hoekstra
Baker	DeGette	Holden
Baldacci	Delahunt	Hooley
Ballenger	DeLauro	Horn
Barcia	DeLay	Hostettler
Barr	Deutsch	Houghton
Barrett (NE)	Diaz-Balart	Hoyer
Barrett (WI)	Dickey	Hulshof
Bartlett	Dicks	Hunter
Barton	Dingell	Hutchinson
Bass	Dixon	Hyde
Bateman	Doggett	Inglis
Becerra	Doolittle	Istook
Bentsen	Doyle	Jackson (IL)
Bereuter	Dreier	Jackson-Lee
Berry	Duncan	(TX)
Bilbray	Dunn	Jefferson
Bilirakis	Edwards	Jenkins
Bishop	Ehlers	John
Blagojevich	Ehrlich	Johnson (CT)
Bliley	Emerson	Johnson (WI)
Blumenauer	Engel	Johnson, E. B.
Blunt	English	Johnson, Sam
Boehlert	Ensign	Jones
Boehner	Eshoo	Kanjorski
Bonilla	Etheridge	Kaptur
Bonior	Evans	Kasich
Bono	Everett	Kelly
Borski	Ewing	Kennedy (MA)
Boswell	Farr	Kennedy (RI)
Boucher	Fattah	Kennelly
Boyd	Fawell	Kildee
Brady (PA)	Fazio	Kilpatrick
Brady (TX)	Filner	Kim
Brown (CA)	Foley	Kind (WI)
Brown (FL)	Forbes	King (NY)
Brown (OH)	Ford	Kingston
Bryant	Fossella	Klecza
Bunning	Fowler	Klink
Burr	Fox	Klug
Burton	Franks (NJ)	Knollenberg
Buyer	Frelinghuysen	Kolbe
Callahan	Furse	Kucinich
Calvert	Galleghy	LaFalce
Camp	Ganske	LaHood
Campbell	Gejdenson	Lampson
Canady	Gekas	Lantos
Cannon	Gephardt	Largent
Capps	Gibbons	Latham
Cardin	Gilchrest	LaTourette
Carson	Gillmor	Lazio
Castle	Gilman	Leach
Chabot	Gonzalez	Lee
Chambliss	Goode	Levin
Chenoweth	Goodlatte	Lewis (CA)
Christensen	Goodling	Lewis (GA)
Clay	Gordon	Lewis (KY)
Clayton	Goss	Linder
Clement	Graham	Lipinski
Clyburn	Granger	Livingston
Coble	Green	LoBiondo
Coburn	Greenwood	Lofgren
Collins	Gutierrez	Lowey
Combest	Gutknecht	Lucas
Condit	Hall (OH)	Luther
Conyers	Hall (TX)	Maloney (CT)
Cook	Hamilton	Manton
Cooksey	Hansen	Manzullo
Costello	Harman	Markey
Cox	Hastert	Martinez
Coyne	Hastings (FL)	Mascara
Cramer	Hastings (WA)	Matsui
Crane	Hayworth	McCarthy (MO)
Crapo	Hefley	McCarthy (NY)

McCollum	Pitts	Smith, Adam
McCrery	Pombo	Smith, Linda
McDade	Pomeroy	Snowbarger
McDermott	Porter	Snyder
McGovern	Portman	Solomon
McHale	Poshard	Souder
McHugh	Price (NC)	Spence
McIntosh	Quinn	Spratt
McIntyre	Radanovich	Stabenow
McKeon	Rahall	Stark
McKinney	Ramstad	Stearns
McNulty	Rangel	Stenholm
Meehan	Redmond	Stokes
Meek (FL)	Regula	Strickland
Meeks (NY)	Reyes	Stump
Menendez	Riggs	Stupak
Metcalfe	Riley	Sununu
Mica	Rivers	Talent
Millender-	Rodriguez	Tanner
McDonald	Roemer	Tauscher
Miller (CA)	Rogan	Tauzin
Miller (FL)	Rogers	Taylor (MS)
Minge	Rohrabacher	Taylor (NC)
Mink	Ros-Lehtinen	Thomas
Moakley	Rothman	Thompson
Mollohan	Roukema	Thornberry
Moran (KS)	Roybal-Allard	Thune
Moran (VA)	Royce	Thurman
Morella	Rush	Tiahrt
Murtha	Ryun	Torres
Myrick	Sabo	Towns
Neal	Salmon	Trafigant
Nethercutt	Sanchez	Turner
Neumann	Sanders	Upton
Ney	Sandlin	Velazquez
Northup	Sanford	Vento
Norwood	Sawyer	Visclosky
Nussle	Saxton	Walsh
Oberstar	Scarborough	Wamp
Obey	Schaefer, Dan	Waters
Oliver	Schaffer, Bob	Watkins
Ortiz	Scott	Watt (NC)
Owens	Sensenbrenner	Watts (OK)
Oxley	Serrano	Waxman
Packard	Sessions	Weldon (FL)
Pallone	Shadegg	Weldon (PA)
Pappas	Shaw	Weller
Parker	Shays	Wexler
Pascarell	Sherman	Weygand
Pastor	Shimkus	White
Paul	Shuster	Whitfield
Paxon	Sisisky	Wicker
Payne	Skaggs	Wilson
Pease	Skeen	Wolf
Pelosi	Skelton	Woolsey
Peterson (MN)	Slaughter	Wynn
Peterson (PA)	Smith (MI)	Yates
Petri	Smith (NJ)	Young (AK)
Pickering	Smith (OR)	Young (FL)
Pickett	Smith (TX)	

□ 1357

The SPEAKER. On this rollcall, 423 Members have recorded their presence by electronic device, a quorum.

Under the rule, further proceedings under the call are dispensed with.

□ 1400

AUTHORIZING THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER SUFFICIENT GROUNDS EXIST FOR THE IMPEACHMENT OF WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1½ minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, to my Republican friends, sincerely, Gerald Ford has said that we must take the path back to dignity. I want that to weigh on the Members' hearts for this

next hour, because more is at stake than the President's fate.

"Moving with dispatch," Gerald Ford said, "the House Judiciary Committee should be able to conclude a preliminary inquiry into possible grounds for impeachment before the end of the year."

I think that we can do it. Our resolution calls for it. I have talked incessantly in private meetings with the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) toward this end, and I hope that all of us will commit ourselves to that goal.

Mr. Speaker, I just want Members to know that in my view, the American people have a deep sense of right and wrong, of fairness and privacy. I believe that the Kenneth W. Starr investigation may have offended those sensibilities. Who are we in the Congress? What is it that we stand for?

Do we want to have prosecutors with unlimited powers, accountable to no one, who will spend a million dollars investigating a person's sex life, is that the precedent we are setting, who then haul them before grand juries, every person that they have known of the opposite sex, every person that they had contact with, and then record and release videos to the public of the grand jury questioning the most private aspects of one's personal life?

Please, I beg the Members not to denigrate this very important process in Article II, Section 4.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. BARNEY FRANK), a senior member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, someone inaccurately, well-intended but inaccurately, said the Democrats were agreeing there should be an inquiry. No, let me define what we say. We accept the fact that the statutorily designated Independent Counsel sent us a referral, and we are obligated to look at it.

But what our resolution says is, let us first look at what he has alleged, and assuming that it is true, decide whether or not those things are impeachable. There is a very real question. If we look at the dismissal of the charge that Richard Nixon did not pay his income tax because it was a personal matter, that would suggest some of these are not impeachable.

If we get to the question of lying, in fact, both the Speaker and I have been reprimanded by this House for lying before official proceedings. That has not kept either of us from continuing to do our duty to our best possible. We will have to look at whether or not these are impeachable issues. But the question is, do we look at those, or do we look at a whole lot of other things.

I think my Republican colleagues fear that there is not enough in those accusations to meet the impeachment standard. That is why they refuse and refuse and refuse to limit it, to get into not just a fishing expedition, but the deep sea fishing expedition of White-water and the other matters.