

# House Democrats Vote to Block Consideration of Trump Impeachment

Led by Pelosi and other usual suspects, Dems unprincipled as ever

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*Featured image: President-elect Donald J. Trump and U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi smile for a photo during the 58th Presidential Inauguration in Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 2017. (DoD photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Marianique Santos)*

On December 6, [a majority of Democrats](#) in the House joined all House Republicans in voting to prevent the House of Representatives from even debating articles of [impeachment against](#) President Trump. The House voted 364-58 (with 10 non-votes) to table impeachment articles (H RES 646) sponsored by Texas Democrat Al Green. Over the strong objections of Democratic leaders (an oxymoron), Green had brought his [impeachment resolution](#) to a vote by invoking his personal privilege as a House member. Green's resolution began:

## ARTICLE I

In his capacity as President of the United States, unmindful of the high duties of his high office and the dignity and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony and courtesies necessary for stability within the society of the United States, Donald John Trump has with his statements done more than insult individuals and groups of Americans, he has harmed the society of the United States, brought shame and dishonor to the office of President of the United States, sowing discord among the people of the United States by associating the majesty and dignity of the presidency with causes rooted in white supremacy, bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism, white nationalism, or neo-Nazism on one or more of the following occasions...

There is nothing surprising or false in this observation. The remainder of Article I lists well-reported occasions when Trump acted as described. There is no doubt that the events occurred. Article I concludes that:

“Donald John Trump by causing such harm to the society of the United States is unfit to be President and warrants impeachment, trial, and removal from office.”

There is no question about what Trump's behavior has been. The argument would be whether his behavior constitutes an impeachable offense under the Constitution's [Article II, section 4](#), which provides only that:

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.

So what are “other High Crimes and Misdemeanors”? The Constitution does not say, and no one knows with certainty what the Constitution’s framers thought they were. What it comes down to in any case of impeachment is whether the president’s behavior is serious enough or damaging enough to the good of the country as a whole that he should be removed from office. Is it enough that he [openly violates his oath](#) of office? Is it enough that he issues [orders illegal on their face](#)? Is it enough that he continues to commit the [war crimes of his predecessors](#)? Is it enough that he [trumpets impeachable offenses](#) on TV? Is it enough that he has [flouted the Constitution](#) since Inauguration Day? Is it enough that he publicly [corrupts the legal process](#)? In any healthy society, the [behavior of Donald John Trump](#) would be enough to provoke serious debate as to whether the country should suffer it any further.

A majority of Democrats, appearing neither serious nor healthy, have now gone on record in opposition even to debating Trump’s behavior on its merits. Those Democrats, 128 of them, mostly white-privileged, have voted in tacit support of the racism, bigotry, and prejudice streaming from the Trump administration. Led by Nancy Pelosi, these 128 Democrats (including all the party leadership except James Clyburn) have taken a public pass on discussing real issues of conscience with national importance. Only 58 Democrats voted with conscience, and the corruption of our system is expressed by Washington’s surprise that there were so many, not so few.

Surprise that there were “only” 128 cowards among Democrats in the House is well founded. Nancy Pelosi is the same leader who lacked the stomach to try to impeach George Bush for lying us into a war that the country continues to pay for in money and blood, albeit mostly other people’s blood. In Pelosi-World, if lying the country into war isn’t an impeachable offense, what is?

And let’s be clear here, it’s not as if the votes of any of those 128 Democrats were going to make *anymaterial* difference in the outcome. The Republican majority in the House was going to table the impeachment resolution no matter how any of the Democrats voted. The Democrats voting not to consider articles of impeachment had no practical grounds for doing so. Each of them put personal politics ahead of any moral reckoning, much less the desperate need of the country for principled leadership. Each of them cast a squalid vote not to confront the profoundly destructive behavior outlined in the impeachment articles, the second (and last) of which began:

## ARTICLE II

In his capacity as President of the United States, unmindful of the high duties of his high office, of the dignity and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony, and respect necessary for stability within the society of the United States, Donald John Trump has with his statements done more than simply insult individuals and groups of Americans, he has harmed the American society by publicly casting contempt on individuals and groups, inciting hate and hostility, sowing discord among the people of the United States, on the basis of race, national origin, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, on one or more of the following occasions ...

Again the resolution lists illustrative instances of the offending behavior, which happened without any doubt.

But 128 Democrats don't want to object, or even to be seen as being willing to object to Trump behavior. These 128 Democrats prefer to be seen voting not to discuss outrages even when there is no chance whatsoever that these outrages will be subject to public debate. They all knew before they voted that Republicans wouldn't allow it. Yet given an absolutely no-risk opportunity to object to Trump behavior, 128 Democrats chose instead to vote as if they have no serious objection to racism-based policy dominating American government. How can we know that's not exactly true?

Democrats have been fleeing from the impeachment process for months now, ever since Green first brought out his articles in May. At least [six other House Democrats](#) have filed articles of impeachment against Trump, none of which have been voted on yet. Five new articles of impeachment were introduced in mid-November, charging Trump with obstruction of justice, illegally taking money from foreign entities, illegally taking money from American entities, undermining the courts in violation of his oath of office, and undermining public media in violation of the First Amendment - all producing demonstrable damage to the United States as a constitutional democracy.

This is all denied by the Democratic leaders, including Pelosi and her minority whip Steny Hoyer of Maryland, who said without apparent irony:

Do we disagree with the policies? We do. But disagreeing with the policies is not enough to overturn an election, a free and fair election.... There are a large number of Democrats that believe this president ought to be impeached, we have just made a judgment that the facts aren't there to pursue that....

According to Hoyer, 2016 was - unquestionably - a "free and fair election," despite evidence that it was anything but, especially the Democratic primaries. He and Pelosi might well have reason to keep anyone from looking too closely at any of that. Their personal culpability in a corrupt primary process involves, at the very least, doing nothing about it. And the troubles of the Democratic party leadership run much deeper than that, [as lucidly articulated](#) Nomicki Konst, member of the Democratic National Committee Unity Reform Commission, who wonders why the DNC spent \$700,000 on five "consultants" but didn't have money for yard signs in Michigan and Wisconsin.

And there's no sense or decency coming from Doug Jones, who was just elected Senator from Alabama. He says the sexual aggression allegations against Trump don't much matter now. He dismisses the women who have come forward recently, he dismisses the movie "[16 Women and Donald Trump](#)" recently released by Brave New Films, and he dismisses calls for Trump's resignation or impeachment. Senator-elect Jones, a lawyer who probably knows better, [told CNN's Jake Tapper](#) in his pseudo-folksy Alabama manner:

You know, Jake, where I am on that right now is that those allegations were made before the election. And so people had an opportunity to judge before that election. I think we need to move on and not get distracted by those issues. Let's get on with the real issues that are facing the people of this country right now.

THAT expresses the specious heart of the Democratic Party these days, a party of dishonesty and denial. Jones must know that the allegations raised during the election were not fully vetted. Jones must know that the allegations have expanded and taken on more weight and credibility as [strong, articulate women](#) have come forward to support them. Jones dismisses issues that matter significantly to more than half the population. And [what does Jones mean](#) by “real issues”? Does he really think a corrupt, bigoted president threatening nuclear war is not a real issue?

The reality of the Trump presidency is that the president has not spent a single minute in office when he wasn't committing at least one impeachable offense. Advised after the election to divest himself of conflicts of interest, Trump [complied in part](#) but [continues to profit](#) from foreign and domestic businesses in clear violation of the [Constitution's emoluments clauses](#) ( Foreign, Article 1, Section 9, Clause 8; and Domestic, Article II, Section 1, Clause 7). In a lawsuit pending since June, almost 200 House and Senate [Democrats have sued](#) Trump to enforce the emoluments clauses. On Inauguration Day 2017, attorney John Bonifaz of Free Speech for People started an impeachment campaign based on [the emoluments clauses](#). In his view, impeachment can and should proceed as a civil action parallel to the criminal action headed by special counsel Robert Mueller. [On Democracy NOW](#) December 15, Bonifaz spoke of the difference between criminal and civil procedures:

The question here are crimes against the state. That is what impeachment is about – abuse of power, abuse of public trust, and not only through the violations of the anti-corruption provisions. There is now, of course, evidence of obstruction of justice. There's evidence of potential conspiracy with the Russian government to interfere with the 2016 elections and violate federal campaign finance laws, among others. There is now evidence of abuse of the pardon power in the pardoning of former Maricopa County Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio. There's recklessly threatening nuclear war against a foreign nation. There's misuse of the Justice Department to try to prosecute political adversaries. And there's the giving aid and comfort to neo-Nazis and white supremacists. All of this—all of this deserves an impeachment investigation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Realistically, no impeachment proceeding can go forward without some Republicans, an unlikely development before the 2018 elections. The Democrats in charge seem to have the same blind assumption of winning that they had in 2016, which is hardly reassuring. Waiting for that “certain” victory, those Democrats are content to subject the country to another year of unchecked Trump behavior, with no Plan B should Democrats fail to take the House. Meanwhile, Democratic shucking and jiving does nothing to bring Republicans face to face with their own monstrosities. Democratic dishonesty at the top seems to know no shame, as Pelosi said [with counter-factual fatuity](#):

If you're going to go down the impeachment path, you have to know you can do it not in a partisan way..... We have an investigation in the Justice Department that is seeking facts. We don't want it to look political.... [My goal is] for our country is to come together to win the next election.

Impeachment is inherently partisan, with the possibility of being bipartisan in part. In reality, “not partisan” is a lie or a delusion. The Mueller investigation is a criminal investigation that may or may not lead directly to indicting a sitting president. It cannot lead directly to

impeachment and removal from office. It might lead there indirectly, but that's a long process that took three years with Nixon. The goal of the country coming together is a fantasy, and winning the next election is purely partisan - what Pelosi says is obscurantist garbage, but that seems to be the best Democratic leaders can give us these days.

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Note: listed below are the [58 House Democrats](#) who voted to proceed to consider Rep. Green's two articles of impeachment. If your Representative is not among them, you might ask him or her why. If we're to have a Democratic wave election in 2018, it might as well be one worth having.



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