

# "No American is above the law"

## Rep. McKinney's floor statement on the impeachment of George W. Bush

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Mr. Speaker:

I come before this body today as a proud American and as a servant of the American people, sworn to uphold the Constitution of the United States.

Throughout my tenure, I've always tried to speak the truth. It's **that** commitment that brings me here today.

We have a President who has misgoverned and a Congress that has refused to hold him accountable. It is a grave situation and I believe the stakes for our country are high.

No American is above the law, and if we allow a President to violate, at the most basic and fundamental level, the trust of the people and then continue to govern, without a process for holding him accountable—what does that say about our commitment to the truth? To the Constitution? To our democracy?

The trust of the American people has been broken. And a process must be undertaken to repair this trust. This process must begin with honesty and accountability.

Leading up to our invasion of Iraq, the American people supported this Administration's actions because they believed in our President. They believed he was acting in good faith. They believed that American laws and American values would be respected. That in the weightiness of everything being considered, two values were rock solid—trust and truth.

From mushroom clouds to African yellow cake to aluminum tubes, the American people and this Congress were not presented the facts, but rather were presented a string of untruths, to justify the invasion of Iraq. President Bush, along with Vice President Cheney and then-National Security Advisor Rice, portrayed to the Congress and to the American people that Iraq represented an imminent threat, culminating with President Bush's claim that Iraq was six months away from developing a nuclear weapon. Having used false fear to buy consent—the President then took our country to war.

This has grave consequences for the health of our democracy, for our standing with our allies, and most of all, for the lives of our men and women in the military and their families—who have been asked to make sacrifices—including the ultimate sacrifice—to keep us safe.

Just as we expect our leaders to be truthful, we expect them to abide by the law and respect our courts and judges. Here again, the President failed the American people.

When President Bush signed an executive order authorizing unlawful spying on American citizens, he circumvented the courts, the law, and he violated the separation of powers provided by the Constitution. Once the program was revealed, he then tried to hide the scope of his offense from the American people by making contradictory, untrue statements.

President George W. Bush has failed to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States; he has failed to ensure that senior members of his administration do the same; and he has betrayed the trust of the American people.

With a heavy heart and in the deepest spirit of patriotism, I exercise my duty and responsibility to speak truthfully about what is before us. To shy away from this responsibility would be easier. But I have not been one to travel the easy road. I believe in this country, and in the power of our democracy. I feel the steely conviction of one who will not let the country I love descend into shame; for the fabric of our democracy is at stake.

Some will call this a partisan vendetta, others will say this is an unimportant distraction to the plans of the incoming Congress. But this is not about political gamesmanship.

I am not willing to put any political party before my principles.

This, instead, is about beginning the long road back to regaining the high standards of truth and democracy upon which our great country was founded.

Mr. Speaker:

Under the standards set by the United States Constitution, President Bush—along with Vice President Cheney, and Secretary of State Rice—should be subject to the process of impeachment, and I have filed H. Res. \_ in the House of Representatives.

To my fellow Americans, as I leave this Congress, it is in your hands—to hold your representatives accountable, and to show those with the courage to stand for what is right, that they do not stand alone.

Thank you.

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