

# **New Mexico Resolution To Impeach President And Vice President In The Senate Rules Committee Hearing**

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Back on January 23rd, Senators Gerald Ortiz y Pino (D-Albuquerque) and John Grubestic (D-Santa Fe) introduced Senate Joint Resolution 5 , to Impeach President Bush and Vice-President Cheney. Along with six other Democratic Senators, including the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee Cisco McSorley (D-Albuquerque), they charged the President with lying to Congress to provoke war, illegal spying on Americans, ordering torture and ordering illegal detentions in violation of statute and the Constitution. Over one hundred citizens assembled for the two hour press conference on that date, nearly half of whom spoke passionately from the podium in favor of the resolution. New Mexico TV Station KRQE ran the story on the evening news including an interview with the Senator. (1)

Jack Cafferty of CNN covered the event and reported, "[Although] House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has said impeachment is quote, 'off the table' not everybody is so sure about that," explained Cafferty. "Two New Mexico state senators have introduced a resolution calling on Congress to impeach President Bush and Vice President Cheney. The measure accuses Mr. Bush and Cheney of misleading Congress about the war in Iraq, torturing prisoners and violating Americans' civil liberties through the domestic spy program. One of the sponsors told a crowd of supporters 'We created a ripple. Your voice is going to turn it into a tidal wave hopefully.' Well the way it works is that a state of course, cannot mandate impeachment of a president but the impeachment charges can be forwarded to the House of Representatives.... The fact that the issue of impeaching a sitting president is being discussed seriously in a state legislature like New Mexico's speaks volumes." (2)

Now, the pro-impeachment Senators will meet their first challenge in the Senate Rules Committee on February 9th at 9AM in Room 321 of the New Mexico State Capitol Building. Organizers expect a huge turnout at the hearing and have fielded expert witnesses, veterans and religious figures to testify. Groundswell support for impeachment has begun as the President ignores the nation and elections regarding the war in Iraq and hostility towards Iran. According to Newsweek, 51% of Americans believe impeachment should be either a high or medium priority.(3) Over the past weekend, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. interviewed Sean Penn who made the case for impeachment on Air America (4) and four pro-impeachment editorials appeared in the Santa Fe New Mexican 's Sunday editorial section (5).

Three citizen editorials (6) ran alongside that of James Bamford, NSA chronicler and plaintiff in the ACLU lawsuit against the NSA and the Administration over warrantless wiretaps. Bamford pointed out that one of the central charges against Nixon was illegal wiretaps on seventeen phone lines, and that the Bush Administration is guilty of thousands of such wiretaps. Entitled, " Bush Is Not Above the Law," (7) Bamford's editorial spelled out the case against the Administration:

"Last Aug. 17, Judge Anna Diggs Taylor of the United States District Court in Detroit issued her ruling in the A.C.L.U. case. The president, she wrote, had "undisputedly violated" not only the First and Fourth Amendments of the Constitution, but also statutory law, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Enacted by a bipartisan Congress in 1978, the FISA statute was a response to revelations that the National Security Agency had conducted warrantless eavesdropping on Americans. To deter future administrations from similar actions, the law made a violation a felony punishable by a \$10,000 fine and five years in prison."

He concludes, "To allow a president to break the law and commit a felony for more than five years without even a formal independent investigation would be the ultimate subversion of the Constitution and the rule of law."

Although the Bush administration is making some half-hearted attempts to negotiate with the Judicial Branch regarding their illegal programs, the New Mexico Senate has begun formal impeachment proceedings citing Jefferson's Rules of the House which allow impeachment charges to be transmitted by a State Legislature . (8) If the Resolution passes in New Mexico, and these charges are brought before the United States House by any one single Member, a mandatory debate of one hour on the subject is prescribed by the rules of parliamentary procedure. The resolution is then assigned to the US Judiciary Committee. Rep. John Conyers, the current Chair of

Judiciary, pointedly declared at the recent antiwar demonstrations in DC that <<http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/node/17830>>Congress can fire the President. (9)

It may be that a Resolution from a State Legislature is all that's necessary to trigger federal impeachment proceedings. In New Mexico, it's the official policy of the Democratic Party. (10)

- (1) <http://www.krqe.com/video/expanded.asp?ID=5678>
- (2) <http://www.thenation.com/blogs/thebeat?pid=160409>
- (3) <http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/node/14897>
- (4) <http://www.ringoffireradio.com/>
- (5) <http://sfnewmexican.com>
- (6) <http://mothermedia.org/impeachmentprocedure.htm>
- (7) <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/31/opinion/31bamford.html>
- (8) <http://impeachbush.tv/impeach/statebasis.html>
- (9) [http://www.truthout.org/docs\\_2006/013007A.shtml](http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/013007A.shtml) (in the video)  
& <http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/node/17830>
- (10) <http://www.nmdemocrats.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/838875>

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