

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE  
GERALD SOLOMON

SPEECH OF

**HON. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr.**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 6, 1998*

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to GERALD SOLOMON, the distinguished gentleman from New York, as he prepares to retire after 20 years of service to the country and his constituents, the last four years as Chairman of the House Rules Committee.

JERRY SOLOMON and I came to Congress together in 1978. In his ten terms representing New York's 22nd District in the House, his colleagues and his constituents have come to know him as a positive force for common sense legislation. JERRY's legacy is one of military preparedness, fiscal responsibility, strong foreign policy and government accountability.

As a former United States Marine, JERRY brought a unique knowledge of the necessities of military readiness to his legislative agenda. In the 1980's, he worked to strengthen our armed services, joining other exemplary leaders such as Ronald Reagan in helping to ensure a peaceful end to the Cold War and the United States' position of strength in the post-Cold War world. His work with the North Atlantic Assembly and his mastery of NATO issues proved an invaluable asset to the House as we considered foreign affairs and national security issues.

But JERRY SOLOMON's importance to the House does not stop there. His colleagues know him as a Member who recognized the patriotism and dignity of this country's veterans and fought tirelessly to see that the government provided them the rights and benefits they so richly deserve.

JERRY SOLOMON also devoted significant energy to securing accountability in our government, taking a principal role in creating the line item veto legislation passed by Congress in 1996. And it is important legislation like this that passes through JERRY's hands each day. As Chairman of the Rules Committee, he continues to dedicate himself to providing for the smooth movement of the many and varied pieces of legislation that come before the House in each session.

His shoes will undoubtedly be hard to fill. I join my colleagues in wishing a JERRY a fond farewell and a successful retirement. We aspire to continue his level of leadership and commitment.

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

SPEECH OF

**HON. BRIAN P. BILBRAY**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 7, 1998*

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, this is a highly emotional and complex matter. In the bright

light of historical significance, we must remember that this solemn result will become the standard applied to future presidents, Democrat or Republican. The issue is larger than William Jefferson Clinton.

I want to emphasize that contrary to what the media coverage may imply, Congress is not obsessed with this matter. The full House has spent a total of only 4 hours debating this issue. During the same week in which this vote was taken, the House and Senate approved House bill 8, my bill to crack down on commuter vehicles from Mexico which do not meet California vehicle emission standards. The President is expected to sign the bill into law. The House is also considering my legislation to hold Mexico accountable on its agreements to fix sewage infrastructure in Tijuana. Only Judiciary Committee members are concentrating on the impeachment inquiry. The rest of us are working on important budgetary, education, health care, environmental and Social Security issues.

As you may know, I have always avoided unnecessary partisanship, and have refrained from criticizing the President's every move during his tenure. He is our elected President and I am obligated by the Constitution to work with him on behalf of my district. It is in the best interest of our nation for Congress to remain focused on the important matter of governing our country, while allowing the members of the House Judiciary Committee the opportunity to perform their duty of reviewing the high volume of documents provided by the Independent Counsel. As I said, Congress has been working effectively on a host of other issues.

However, today the full House of Representatives was required to devote its time to considering the resolution from the Judiciary Committee requesting authority to proceed with an *impeachment inquiry*. This was not a vote to *impeach President Clinton*. Even a majority of the Democrats on the Judiciary Committee wanted to proceed with an impeachment inquiry. The difference between the Republican and Democrat inquiry proposals was in its length and scope. It is interesting to note that even "The Washington Post" and "The New York Times," two newspapers whose editorial positions are historically left of center, supported the Republican position on the length and scope of the inquiry.

By a vote of 258 to 176 the House decided to proceed with an inquiry. I voted with the majority. Again, most of the Democrats voting against the resolution were not opposed to proceeding with an impeachment *inquiry*. They simply had legitimate concerns on its length and scope. They were requesting that the inquiry be finished by Thanksgiving of this year. Under the resolution that was approved (House Resolution 581) the inquiry will terminate at the end of this year.

Though the President and others in public life deserve some semblance of privacy, like most Americans I am very disappointed in the President's decision to have a relationship with a subordinate employee in the White House. This type of behavior is unacceptable in any workplace including in a hallway near the Oval Office. His lack of judgment was appalling for a man of his age and position.

However, the ultimate question before us is not one of sexual conduct. It is whether perjury and obstruction of justice were committed in the magnitude to require impeachment. I

am still reviewing the alleged impeachable offenses outlined in the report and by the Judiciary Committee counsels. I am determined to sort out the facts. This is why I supported the resolution to proceed with an *inquiry*. Second only to a declaration of war, voting on bills of impeachment is Congress' most serious duty. Without a process to determine the facts there would be no reasonable way to reach a decision on such a vote.

I, personally, hope that the evidence is not substantial enough to require a constitutionally mandated vote on impeachment. But, it would be irresponsible of me to develop a final position on impeachment until after the Judiciary Committee has completed the impeachment inquiry and all the evidence and rebuttals are on the table. The Independent Counsel has only submitted a preliminary report to Congress because he believes that there was enough evidence in the Lewinsky matter to demonstrate perjury, witness tampering, and obstruction of justice as grounds for impeachment. Congress expects a full report on all of the other allegations, including Whitewater, Filegate, Travelgate, to be submitted by the Independent Counsel in the coming months.

Despite unfortunate initial "jockeying" by both sides, I have faith and confidence in my House colleagues, both Republican and Democrat, to ultimately perform this constitutional duty in a fair and bipartisan manner. An issue as grave as possible impeachment of the President must not—in appearance or fact—be driven by partisan considerations. We have embarked on a very solemn process and it is necessary for the House to remain dignified by not allowing these proceedings to be taken to a personal or political level. It is imperative that the laws of our land be strictly followed because next to sending our men and women to war, this is our most difficult responsibility.

Like other parents, I have had a difficult time explaining this issue to my children. Ultimately, I used it as an object lesson: No matter how embarrassing the truth may be, honesty is always the best policy. The President could have spared the country, his family and himself much pain had he told the complete truth. Lying about an affair should be a private matter between a husband and wife. Unfortunately, the President was under oath in a judicial process. Now the Congress and country is forced to proceed under a constitutional mandate. Congress must remain cognizant of the fact that the result will be a standard to which Presidents from now on will be held.

Many letters and e-mails to my office have reflected a lack of understanding of the process. I would like to reiterate that IF, AFTER completion of the impeachment inquiry, the House votes in favor of impeachment, it does not mean the President is automatically removed from office. The process would then move to the Senate where he would be tried, with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court presiding over the proceedings. It would take a conviction supported by two-thirds (66 out of 100) of the Senate to remove the President from office. Under the Constitution, there is no authority given for the House and Senate to "censure" the President.

I will do everything in my power to ensure that this matter does not overwhelm the important legislative issues before Congress.