Smith, Adam
Snowbarger
Snyder
Solomon
Spence
Spratt
Stabenow
Stearns
Stenholm
Stokes
Stump
Sununu
Talent
Tanner
Tauzin
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thornberry
Thune
Tiahrt
Torres
Traficant
Upton
Walsh
Wamp
Watkins
Watt (NC)
Watts (OK)
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Weygand
White
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson
Wise
Wolf
Yates
Young (AK)

NAYS—125

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Baesler
Baldacci
Becerra
Berry
Bishop
Bonior
Borski
Brady (PA)
Brown (CA)
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Carson
Clay
Clayton
Clyburn
Condit
Costello
Coyne
Cramer
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Deutsch
Dickey
Dicks
Dixon
Doyle
Engel
English
Ensign
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fattah
Fazio
Filner
Ford
Frost
Furse
Gejdenson
Gephardt
Green
Gutierrez
Hall (OH)
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hefner
Hilliard
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holden
Hooley
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson, E. B.
Kanjorski
Kennedy (RI)
Kennelly
Kilpatrick
Klink
Kucinich
LaFalce
Lantos
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Luther
Manton
Markey
Martinez
Mascara
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McDermott
McGovern
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Menendez
Millender-McDonald
Mink
Neal
Oberstar
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Peterson (MN)
Pickett
Pomeroy
Poshard
Price (NC)
Reyes
Rodriguez
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Sabo
Sanchez
Sawyer
Schaffer, Bob
Serrano
Skaggs
Skelton
Stark
Strickland
Stupak
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thompson
Thurman
Tierney
Turner
Velazquez
Vento
Waxman
Wexler
Woolsey
Wynn

NOT VOTING—32

Barton
Burton
Chenoweth
Crane
Davis (VA)
Fossella
Frank (MA)
Gonzalez
Johnson, Sam
Klug
Knollenberg
Largent
Maloney (NY)
McCrery
McDade
Miller (CA)
Pastor
Paul
Pelosi
Pickering
Pryce (OH)
Rangel
Riggs
Sessions
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith, Linda
Souder
Towns
Visclosky
Waters
Young (FL)

☐ 0921

Mrs. MEEK of Florida, Mr. BERRY and Mr. HINOJOSA changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Ms. LOFGREN and Mr. HALL of Texas changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the Journal was approved.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on December 18th and 19th, I was unavoidably detained due to a family illness. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner: Friday, December 18, 1998: Motion to Adjourn (Roll Call No. 540): ''Nay.'' Saturday, December 19, 1998: Approval of the House Journal (Roll Call No. 541): ''Aye.''

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SOLOMON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE—IMPEACHING WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, FOR HIGH CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the further consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 611), impeaching William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States, for high crimes and misdemeanors.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Friday, December 18, 1998, the resolution is debatable for 1 additional hour equally divided between the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), and the previous question is ordered on the resolution to final adoption without intervening motion except one motion to recommit.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE).

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROGAN).

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, the evidence is overwhelming. The question is elementary. The President was obliged under his sacred oath faithfully to execute our Nation's laws. Yet he repeatedly perjured himself and obstructed justice, not for any noble purpose but to crush a humble lone woman's right to be afforded access to the courts. Now his defenders plead for no constitutional accountability for the one American uniquely able to defend or debase our Constitution and the rule of law.

When they are old enough to appreciate today's solemnity, I want my young daughters to know that when the last roll was called, their father served in a House faithful to the guiding principle that no person is above the law. And he served with colleagues who counted it a privilege to risk political fortune in defense of the Constitution.

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to strongly oppose these articles of impeachment and this very flawed and undemocratic process. This process and this action are the real crimes against the American people and our democracy. This march to impeachment is an attempt to undo and overthrow a duly elected President and ignores the will of the people.

Denying a vote on censure creates the appearance of a one-party autocracy which we condemn abroad and which history has proven can lead to authoritarian rule. This Republican Party coup underscores that their only goal is to turn back the clock on an agenda that puts people first; an agenda that will want to cancel policies that value and support basic human rights, such as a woman's right to choose, a good public education instead of vouchers; that insists on a living wage for working men and women; that protects our environment; that supports the Patient's Bill of Rights and that preserves Social Security.

The Republican process is cynical and it is dangerous. It will be recorded that they stood on the wrong side of history. We must restore the public trust and establish a Congress which communicates respect for the people of the United States, the Constitution and democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to strongly oppose these articles of impeachment. I join my Democratic colleagues in speaking out against this flawed, undemocratic process.

This process and this action are the real crimes against the American people and our democracy.

This Republican Congress is marching this country into an impeachment of President Clinton in an attempt to undo and overthrow a duly elected President. This ignores the will of the people.

We condemn single party rule abroad. But this Republican Congress refuses to allow the minority party to vote on censure. But squelching the minority's requests for debate, for fairness, and for reasonable alternatives, this Republican Congress demonstrates its contempt for the Presidency, for the democratic process, and for the will of the people of this nation.

It abridges the Constitution by restricting and closing off legislative options, and creates the appearances of a one-party autocracy, which history has proven can lead to authoritarian rule.

This Republican party coup underscore that their only goal is to turn back an agenda that puts people first. To cancel a program that values basis human rights. That values a woman's right to choose, and that supports good public education instead of vouchers. Their goal is to cancel an agenda that insists that working women and men have a right to a living wage. An agenda that protects our environment. An agenda that fights for a Patient's Bill of Rights and preserves Social Security.

Today's vote is one of the most important votes in American history. The Republican's process is cynical and dangerous. It will be recorded that the Republicans have stood on the wrong side of history. As Americans who value an open and just society, we must reject this madness and say yes to openness. Say yes to fairness.

We must restore public trust and establish a Congress which communicates respect for the people of the United States, the Constitution, and democracy. A vote on a censure motion will allow the opinion and the voice of millions of Americans to be heard.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, this long and difficult process for all of us in the House is almost to a conclusion. Twenty-five years ago a Democratic-controlled Judiciary Committee with a minority of Republicans reported articles of impeachment against Richard Nixon. Why? Nixon cheated. He cheated the electoral system by concealing efforts of a political break-in. And his people thought the other side deserved to be cheated. They thought his enemies deserved to be mistreated. Ladies and gentlemen, they were wrong.

Today Republicans, with a small handful of Democrats, will vote to impeach President Clinton. Why? Because we believe he committed crimes resulting in cheating our legal system. We believe he lied under oath numerous times, that he tampered with evidence, that he conspired to present false testimony to a court of law. We believe he assaulted our legal system in every way. Let it be said that any President who cheats our institutions shall be impeached.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KLECZKA).

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, like all my colleagues I spent a great deal of time carefully reviewing the Judiciary Committee testimony and evidence. Let me make it absolutely clear I do not in any way condone the President's behavior. But the framers made clear that the constitutional act of impeachment is not meant to punish a President for deplorable behavior, but to protect our Nation from acts which jeopardize our democratic system. What the President did was wrong, both personally and morally. But his acts did not threaten our democracy and thus do not rise to the level of impeachable offenses as defined by our Founding Fathers in our Constitution.

□ 0930

I do believe that the President should be held accountable for his actions, and support an alternative to impeachment that will both condemn his actions and fine him. The Committee on the Judiciary considered a censure resolution which we in the full House are being denied the opportunity to debate and vote on today.

Our Founding Fathers designed impeachment specifically to protect the Nation from grave harm from a Chief Executive who clearly endangers our constitutional democracy. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the President's actions meet this test. The penalty for his misconduct should not be exacted through impeachment, but through indictment in our criminal court system and a stern censure by this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, like all my colleagues, I have spent a great deal of time carefully reviewing the Judiciary Committee testimony and evidence. Let me make absolutely clear that I do not in any way condone the President's behavior. But the Framers made clear that the constitutional act of impeachment is not meant to punish a president for deplorable behavior but to protect our nation from acts which jeopardize our decmoratic system. What the President did was wrong, both personally and morally, but his acts did not threaten our democracy and thus do not rise to the level of impeachable offenses as defined by our founding fathers in the Constitution.

As Mr. Burce Ackerman, a constitutional law and impeachment expert at Yale University, testified before the Judiciary Committee, ''Once we lower the impeachment standard to include conduct that does not amount to a clear and present danger to our constitutional order, we will do grevious damage to the independence of the Presidency. [T]here can be little doubt that the present case falls short of the standard set by the Framers when they insisted on 'high crimes and misdemeanors against the state.'''

I do believe that the President should be held accountable for his actions, and support an alternative to impeachment that would both condemn his actions and fine him. The Judiciary Committee considered a censure resolution which we in the full House are being denied the opportunity to debate and vote on today.

Many of my constituents have called and been resolute in their belief that the President should be held accountable for his actions, and I could not agree more. President Clinton is not above the law and is still subject to indictment, trial, and sentencing in the same manner as all other citizens who do wrong. He will be fully subject to criminal prosecution for his wrongful acts when he leaves office.

Our founding fathers designed impeachment specifically to protect the nation from grave harm from a Chief Executive who clearly endangers our constitutional democracy. I do not believe the President's actions meet this test. The penalty for his misconduct should not be exacted through impeachment, but through indictment in our criminal court system and a stern censure by the Congress.

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

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is very simple. Accountability comes not from opinions; really in a way it does not even come from votes. It comes from those three great pillars of our society that are the basis for the rule of law. It is our laws, the Criminal Code of the United States of America, which based on exhaustive evidence this President has violated pursuant to a pattern of activity. It is based on the evidence, the evidence accumulated, considered at great length and voted on, and available to every Member of the House by the Independent Counsel, and as summarized in the report of our very able staff on the Committee on the Judiciary; and finally, the smallest yet most profound document that we have before us in all of our deliberations, the Constitution of the United States.

Today our votes and our consciences must be based on these three great pillars of the rule of law: the law itself, the evidence and the Constitution.

God bless the United States of America.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD).

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, as our Commander in Chief battles the problems in Iraq he is also battling for his presidency in the people's House. This could have waited. Wrong day, wrong way.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the articles of impeachment before this House this morning. I urge Members to step outside the passion of their convictions and think about our obligations to the Constitution, to our constituents and the American people before we cast this vote.

Mr. Speaker, I had hoped this moment could have never come and the members of the Committee on the Judiciary, after carefully examining the evidence, history and their conscience, could recognize that these charges do not rise to the level of an impeachable offense. However, with this vote we have the opportunity by censure to live up to the Framers' vision and honorably close a sad chapter in our Republic's history, or we can open a new one that is perilous.

I will say to my colleagues that the American people and history will judge us. Yes, we have the votes to impeach, but can our conscience withstand the scrutiny that history will bring to bear on our vote?

What a sad day in the history of America.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LIVINGSTON).

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

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise with the fondest hopes that the bitterness engendered in this debate will at its conclusion be put aside, and that all Members will return to their families for the holidays mindful of what has been done here by we as agents of principle. We have fulfilled our duty to our magnificent Constitution.

Yes, our young men and women in the uniformed Armed Services have in these last few days set about the task of ridding the earth of the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of an enemy of civilization, Saddam Hussein, and they have performed their tasks with valor and fortitude, that we may freely engage in this most unpleasant aspect of self government as was envisioned by our forefathers.

I very much regret the enmity and hostility that has been bred in the Halls of Congress for the last months and years. I want so very much to pacify and cool our raging tempers and return to an era when differences were confined to the debate and not of personal attack or assassination of character.

I am proud to serve in this institution, and I respect every Member of this body. Each of us stands here because a majority of roughly 600,000 people had the confidence to vest us with

this authority to act as their agents in a representative democracy.

When given the chance, we often find that aside from political and partisan differences we have much in common with one another. But we never discover what that common ground may be with the gulf between the sides of this narrow aisle.

The debate has done nothing to bring us together, and I greatly regret that it has become quite literally the opening gambit of the intended Livingston speakership. I most certainly would have written a different scenario, had I had the chance.

But we are all pawns on the chessboard, and we are playing our parts in a drama that is neither fiction nor unimportant. Indeed, it is of utmost significance in the course of American history, and my desire to create an environment for healing must take lesser precedence than must the search for responsibility, duty and justice within the format provided by the U.S. Constitution.

I believe we are in active pursuit of these goals, and I give great credit to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), and Mr. Tom Mooney and all the members and staff, majority and minority, of the Committee on the Judiciary for their deliberate and conscientious effort on this most difficult task.

We are nearing completion, and however the vote turns out, no one may say that we did not own up to our constitutional responsibility as Members of Congress in a careful, respectful and insightful debate. Much credit is due our presiding officer, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD), who has done an outstanding job.

Mr. Speaker, we differ on process. The minority believes that we acted too hastily in view of the troops in the field, and that we omitted an alternative from the options available for consideration. We in the majority believe we have properly begun the debate after setting aside a whole day to honor and praise our troops and the effort that they are extending on our behalf. General Schwarzkopf, the commander of the troops in Iraq several years ago, agreed with us on the Brian Williams Show on MSNBC just two nights ago. We believe, we believe that the Constitution envisioned that censure not be a part of the debate on whether or not to impeach the President, and we are supported there by comments by then majority leader Tip O'Neill during the Nixon impeachment proceedings.

So there are differences in process; what about substance? The minority has maintained that the President has not perjured himself and that even if he did, such perjury was not intended within the term ''high crimes and misdemeanors'' delineated in Article 2, Section 4 of our Constitution.

Surely no President has been impeached for perjury, but at least three Federal judges have been impeached and convicted under the perjury statutes, and so perjury, a felony punishable by up to 5 years in the penitentiary, is a crime for which the President may be held accountable, no matter the circumstances.

Perjury is a felony, as I have said, and fully 116 people are serving time in Federal prison as we speak for perjury today, and, yes, there have been several instances of people going to prison following convictions for perjury involving lies under oath under sexual circumstances.

The average citizen knows that he or she must not lie under oath. Ms. Christine Simms of Rockville, Maryland, wrote to the Committee on the Judiciary just 2 weeks ago and said, and I quote:

> I too was called upon to give answers under oath in interrogatories during a civil proceeding. Truthful answers to those questions would be embarrassing to me, and what I knew exposed me to criticism and had a potential to ruin my life, particularly as it related to my children whom I love very much. In short, I was scared to tell the truth. However, I did just that. I could not lie when I was sworn to tell the truth, no matter what the risks nor the degree of temptation to take the easy way out. Parts of my life have been difficult since that time because elements of that testimony have been used to scorn me. But I as a common citizen was compelled by my conscience to tell the truth.

Yes, our Nation is founded on law, not on the whim of man. We are not ruled by kings or emperors, and there is no divine right of Presidents. A President is an ordinary citizen, vested with the power to govern and sworn to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Inherent in that oath is the responsibility to live within its laws with no higher or lower expectations than the average citizen, just like Ms. Simms.

When the President appeared at the deposition of Ms. Jones and secondly before the Federal grand jury, he was sworn to a second oath, to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God. This, according to witnesses to the Committee on the Judiciary and before the Special Counsel, he did not do. For this I will vote to impeach the President of the United States and ask that his case be considered by the United States Senate, that other body of this great Congress, uphold their responsibility to render justice on these most serious charges.

But to the President I would say:

Sir, you have done great damage to this Nation over this past year, and while your defenders are contending that further impeachment proceedings would only protract and exacerbate the damage to this country, I say that you have the power to terminate that damage and heal the wounds that you have created. You, sir, may resign your post.

And I can only challenge you in such fashion if I am willing to heed my own words.

To my colleagues, my friends and most especially my wife and family: I have hurt you all deeply, and I beg your forgiveness.

I was prepared to lead our narrow majority as Speaker, and I believe I had it in me to do a fine job. But I cannot do that job or be the kind of leader that I would like to be under current circumstances, so I must set the example that I hope President Clinton will follow.

Mr. Speaker, I will not stand for Speaker of the House on January 6, but rather I shall remain as a back bencher in this Congress that I so dearly love for approximately 6 months into the 106th Congress, whereupon I shall vacate my seat and ask my Governor to call a special election to take my place.

I thank my constituents for the opportunity to serve them; I hope they will not think badly of me for leaving. I thank Allen Martin, my chief of staff, and all of my staff for their tireless work on my behalf, and I thank my wife most especially for standing by me. I love her very much.

God bless America.

□ 0945

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, continuing the business under the incredible turn of events that has occurred, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. JOSÉ SERRANO).

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

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is a tough time to follow, but I must stay the course and be true to myself. The Republican right wing in this country does not like it when we say coup d'etat, so I will make it easier for them, golpe de estado. That is Spanish for overthrowing the government.

From day one they wanted to get rid of Bill Clinton. From day one they stood on him and tried to make him out to be the number one villain in this country. They have been blinded by hate then and they are blinded by hate today. This place is full of hate because of what they tried to do to our president.

My constituents do not hate Bill Clinton, they love him, and they are praying for him right at this very moment. That side may have the votes today to impeach them, but they do not have the American people.

Let me tell the Members something, I grew up in the public housing projects of the South Bronx. I can tell a bunch of bullies when I see them. The bullies get theirs, and these Members are getting get theirs, too. The people are going to rise up from California to New York. They are going to rise up from Texas to Florida, everywhere in this country, and they are going to tell us, do not do this to him. By the way, do not ask him to quit. He will never quit.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The Chair would ask all

Members to respect the time constraints under which we are operating.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA).

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I really do not know how to begin, following BOB LIVINGSTON's astounding announcement, except to say that our prayers are with the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOB LIVINGSTON). His decision must be respected, but we are all profoundly distressed. His action only underscores what I was prepared to say before the gentleman from Louisiana made his announcement. I was prepared to say, and now more than ever insist, that ''These are the times that try men's souls.'' Indeed it was on this date, December 17, 1776, that Thomas Paine published that essay. We all share in the emotional trauma, getting back to our subject, of this constitutional crisis in which we are all ensnared.

But this cup cannot pass us by. We cannot avoid it. We took an oath of office, Mr. Speaker, to uphold the Constitution under our democratic system of government, separation of powers, and checks and balances. We must fulfill that oath and send the articles of impeachment to the Senate for a trial.

I want to say personally, and all who know me, and many do, I have served in this House a long time, I bear no personal animosity towards the President. But we in the House did not seek this constitutional confrontation. It was thrust upon us by a series of legal maneuvers and denials.

Let me stress, going back to the President again, that the articles of impeachment are not about sex or the privacy of the President and his family. Those personal matters, which even his supporters deplore, are between him, his God, and his family.

These charges are about perjury before a grand jury and obstruction of justice. It is about whether the President is above the laws that apply to all Americans.

We must vote to send this evidence reported by the Judiciary Committee to the Senate for trial.

So the Congress and the American people can determine, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, whether—''This Nation or any other nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure''.

This is our solemn obligation. History will judge us. We owe it to our children and grandchildren.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair asks that all Members respect the rights of others while they are speaking, and we will try and stay within the time constraints. We have a limited amount of time here.

REQUEST FOR CALL OF THE HOUSE

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, would it be in order to have a call of the House at this point? I call for a quorum call.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Chair's discretionary authority, the Chair would prefer not to do that. The Chair appreciates the suggestion of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), but the Chair would prefer to proceed.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I think that we need to pause here for a moment. There is a songwriter who wrote a song that says, give me a higher love.

Mr. Speaker, the Framers of the Constitution did not entrust this House with the power to impeach the President of the United States in order to establish this body as a court of personal morality. Impeachment was supposed to be a constitutional shield, not a moral or political sword.

For all of these reasons, we should step back from this edge of this dangerous cliff. Serious crimes have been committed that this Congress needs to address. Every morning children across the Nation go to school and sit in overcrowded classrooms and deteriorating and crumbling facilities, and Congress turns a blind eye. That is a serious crime.

Every afternoon people find themselves lacking access to affordable health care, trying to figure out how to afford the prescription drugs they need. People are suffering, and even dying, even as we debate today. That is a serious crime.

Every evening people sit at their dinner tables wondering how they will afford a college education for their children, whether they need or even if they will be able to get a second job. That is a serious offense.

We should be leaving personal and moral sanctions to the courts, the branch of government where they properly belong. We should be doing the job we were elected to do. The wisdom of history, not the passions of this moment, must guide our actions.

As David cried out to the Lord in the Book of Psalms—''For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in thy judgement.''

The President has asked for the forgiveness of his family, his God and the American people. Let us not continue to persecute a person who has sought to make his peace.

I pray to God that wisdom will prevail.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield one minute to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL).

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

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, the example that the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOB LIVINGSTON) has set for us has completely changed what I was going to say. Let me offer these words instead. He has shown us the importance of trust. If we cannot trust our leaders, they cannot govern. The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOB LIVINGSTON) has led by example.

Our Constitution was amended in 1967 to allow removal for incapacitation. Prior to that, the only way to remove a person who was physically incapacitated was impeachment. Today we deal with incapacitation of a different kind; a person who, by his conduct under oath in a Federal criminal grand jury, demonstrated that he would not tell the truth if it was in his interest not to tell the truth. He has incapacitated himself from being president.

The voters of our country elected AL GORE to be president if Bill Clinton were incapacitated. That day has arrived.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, while the world is rocked by war and the spectacle of removing a president, our drama here is not about impeachment, it is what we have done to ourselves. We have managed to squeeze the life out of what is the most important vote we will ever cast, the overturning of a presidential election. Gone is any pretext of fairness or nonpartisanship, rendering us unable to do what a majority of the public and what a majority of this House wants to do, issue a harsh statement of condemnation and censure.

In the final death throes of this Congress we have debased our powers, we have frayed our fragile bases for bipartisan cooperation, making the impeachment process just one more pathogen in the medical chest of toxic politics. We will long be judged by our failure to deal fairly, quickly, and decisively with the President's shameful behavior.

It is with great sadness that I vote to oppose this flawed, tragic symbol of the continued unraveling of our political process.

Mr. Speaker, the experts tell us there are five stages of grief from denial to bargaining then anger, followed by depression, and ultimately, acceptance.

Most of us as Americans have been experiencing this sequence of emotions as we react to this tangled national soap opera. For some time now, I like many Americans, have been trapped somewhere between the stages of anger and depression. We have been in a large echo chamber dominated by many angry and frustrated voices, but are now at the central issue: ''What does Congress do?'' A vote to impeach the President is simply not warranted by the facts. It is, rather, a dangerous precedent that is completely inconsistent with our requirements and responsibilities under the Constitution.

The President can and will be punished for his conduct. In part, that has already happened. No one in history has been the object of such world-wide scorn, anger and ridicule as Bill Clinton. The details are all known to anyone who cares to know about them as well as many who really don't have the slightest interest. Nor is the President, by any stretch of the imagination, through being punished. The public humiliation continues in Congress, in the press and on the late night comedy shows. As he leaves office he can be subject

to perjury and further lawsuit just like any other citizen. The President has expended millions of dollars in legal fees with no end in sight. Of course, there has been a permanent loss in his reputation. Congress can and should censure his conduct and express the deep disappointment of the American people in his behavior.

The reality is that it is not our role in Congress to deal with America's anger and sense of betrayal by adopting a very dangerous standard for impeachment.

My research and consultation with constitutional experts convinces me that impeachment for ''high crimes and misdemeanors'' would not include an act that did relate to the official duties of the Office of the President. For example, one of the articles of impeachment that was drafted but not presented to the House Judiciary Committee in the Watergate Inquiry was Richard Nixon's alleged tax evasion. In that case Nixon would have been subjected to prosecution like any other citizen, after he left office.

This is a difficult concept at best. It grates on us. We in Congress would like to right the wrongs of the world, especially if they are somebody else's wrongs.

Yet there are some things that the Constitution does not permit us to do. It is with good reason that this threshold of what constitutes an impeachable offense should remain higher rather than lower. A lower standard of what constitutes an impeachable offense would severely weaken future Presidents of either party, allowing them to be manipulated for political purposes. I must agree with the constitutional experts that under the lower standard credible inquires into impeachment could have been launched against President Roosevelt about Lend Lease operations with Britain, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon about Vietnam, and Reagan and Bush about the Iran Contra scandal.

I fear the use of impeachment not just for the paralytic effect it would have on the Executive Branch. It would have a corrosive effect on Congress, with the possibility of being constantly in a state of attack, because there will always be determined minorities who will be able to pursue these actions due to this dramatically reduced standard.

Congress should guard the process of impeachment for the future of the Presidency, the integrity of Congress and the possibility of getting on with the business of running the Government. I cast my vote against impeachment with the hope to be able to express the will of my constituents that the President's conduct be severely censured.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON).

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, there are very few values and legal obligations that are fundamental, the foundation on which all else rests. But personal responsibility, a responsibility that each of us bears to tell the truth under oath, is such a fundamental responsibility.

If we treat perjury lightly, the only path to truth can be blocked by the instinct to lie, to cover up shame, or the determination to do harm to others. In either case, regardless of the motivation to lie, the result is the same. The path to truth is blocked.

Mr. Speaker, there can be no justice without the truth. That is just profoundly so, and that is why perjury matters. Had the President been able to face up to the truth a year ago, we would not be here. If he had faced up to the truth a month ago, he could have taken responsibility for the impact of that on our Nation and individuals. Our Nation can survive a transition better than it can survive the erosion of our fundamental values.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sentiment that I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. CHRIS SHAYS).

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, after Judge Starr's report to Congress in September and his presentation to the Judiciary Committee in November, I concluded that impeachable offenses were not proven and that the proven offenses were not impeachable.

□ 1000

But the President's continued failure to come to grips with his actions; the sincerity and arguments of members of the Judiciary Committee from both sides of the aisle; the change of heart and conviction by Members on my side of the aisle who originally opposed impeachment and who now support it; and the strong and powerful opinion of so many of my constituents who oppose my position and wanted the President impeached, caused me to rethink my position.

Like you, I listened to my constituents: those who supported impeachment and those who opposed it. I revisited the evidence, reexamined the documents, and even looked at documents I had not seen earlier. I spoke to people who were truly experts on these issues—people who I have immense respect for.

Yesterday morning, before I visited with the President, I concluded that my original position was the correct one—for me. I believe that the impeachable offenses have not been proven and that the proven offenses are not impeachable. But they are close. And that's why I understand why Members who happen to be primarily Democrats concluded that the President should not be impeached and Members on my side of the aisle—Republicans believe he should be impeached.

With no exception, I truly believe that every Member of Congress is voting his or her conscience. In a few minutes, the President of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton, will be impeached. But he will not be impeached with my vote. I cast my vote with no criticism of those who think differently and who will vote differently. We've all tried to do our best. And we will all have to live with our vote the rest of our lives.

My prayers are for this country and its people, our President and his family, and for the House of Representatives and its Members, all of whom I dearly love. I pray the President of the United States will be able to do the right thing in the days and weeks and months to come. And I pray Republicans and Democrats in Congress will find common ground and do the work of the people of this great and prosperous land during the next two years.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON).

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, there are those who would have the American people believe that my colleagues and I have been threatened by our party to fall into line. We have seen this morning this is not about falling into line. It is about honor.

I have only been here 5 months. The New Mexico that I love is more Democrat than Republican. And not once, not once has any leader of this House even so much as asked me how I will vote.

No, Mr. Speaker, the line that I will fall into today is the line of legislators who are doing in our hearts what we believe to be right, even if it would be easier to do otherwise.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH).

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

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I would hope that my friends, and many are indeed my friends in the majority, would recognize that in their attempt to get Bill Clinton, they have at least lost one Speaker and one Speaker to-be. They could be almost accused of being the gang that could not shoot straight.

This effort, this effort to get Bill Clinton, first it was Whitewater, then it was campaign finance, FBI files, Travelgate. We come to the floor today and they are going to vote to impeach this President for having an affair and not telling the truth about it?

This is something that is, I think for the majority of people in this country, a nonsensical issue. On one hand we have 16 million new jobs, a balanced budget, better education, we have a President committed to protecting the environment and preserving Social Security. On the other hand we have a party determined to do nothing other than to attack and investigate and now to finally impeach Bill Clinton. We deserve better.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER).

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

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Speaker, after careful review of the evidence, I will vote today to impeach President William Jefferson Clinton. I believe the evidence is overwhelming that the President committed perjury before a Federal grand jury and in other settings, that he obstructed the administration of justice, and that he abused his office by lying under oath to Congress.

''The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help me God.'' Like the Pledge of Allegiance, those words are ingrained in every American from an early age. They are the foundation of our legal system which is the foundation of a civil society.

If America's chief law enforcement officer sought to compromise the integrity of that legal system, it is a matter of the highest consequence and requires us to invoke our most serious of constitutional prerogatives, impeachment, and refer this matter to the other body for trial. No individual, not even the President, is above the law.

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

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

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, as an American who cares deeply about our Constitution, I rise in opposition to this impeachment process.

This is a difficult time for our Nation. The impeachment of a president has happened only once before in history. I cast my vote against impeachment solemnly, after serious study and many hours of soul searching. It has been especially difficult to watch this issue come before the House of Representatives while our American troops are at war against Saddam Hussein.

Impeachment is the most constitutional power given to Congress. It is the first step in overturning a democratically held election and removing the President. When Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and the other framers of our Constitution adopted the impeachment mechanism, they spoke of it as an alternative to assassination or a military coup, to be used only for treason, bribery of other high crimes against the government. I believe that the President's actions, while immoral and irresponsible, were not treasonous, and do not meet the high test of impeachment as intended by our Founders.

Make no mistake. The President's behavior is indefensible. He did not tell the truth about his actions, and he should be held accountable for his behavior. I strongly believe that the best way to do this—in fact the only constitutional alternative—is through censure and a stiff fine. Once President Clinton has completed his term in office, he should be charged with perjury before a court of law, just as any other private citizen would be.

I am disappointed that the Republican leadership refused to allow a vote on censure. Although opponents are correct that censure is not specifically mentioned in the Constitution, there is nothing that prohibits this action. There are at least four instances of Congressional censure involving Presidents—Presidents Jackson (1834), Tyler (1842, Polk (1848) and Buchanan (1860). Subsequent sessions of Congress have continued to consider censure resolutions. Former President Gerald Ford, former Senator Bob Dole and other Republicans have called on Congressional leaders to permit a censure vote. Do they not understand the Constitution? It is tragically unfair that the opportunity for at least half of our Members to vote our conscience will not be allowed.

We have many important issues that we need to consider in the coming months, and I intend to keep my focus on the important matters that affect our families. I pray that we can come together in the new year and begin the healing process for our nation. This is a sad day for our country and our Constitution.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD).

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

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of a serious debate, a serious matter for all Americans, even for those Americans that I represent who cannot vote for President. But he is our President as much as any American community, and I and my constituents stand against the impeachment of the President.

With weighty and eloquent words, we have been told that this is a matter of conscience, that Members of this body should vote their conscience based upon their understanding of the Constitution, the charges, and evidence presented against the President.

But this view of conscience is a limited one. One can only vote their conscience if they have the conscience of the Republican Majority leadership, if they accept only the majority's view of the Constitution, and only if they accept the majority's view of the charges and options available.

Yes, this is a vote for one's conscience, but only if one's conscience is exactly that of the Republican Majority. The debate today will not allow for that one option, that of censure, which meets the conscience of most Americans and probably a majority of Members of this House. The conscience option of censure is absent and its failure to be included is fundamentally unfair and a blemish on this Nation's democratic tradition.

Mr. Speaker, We are obviously in the midst of one of this nation's most serious debate; a serious matter for all Americans, even those that I represent, Americans who can not vote for President because they live in a territory of this country. Nevertheless, President Clinton is our President as much as he is the President of any other American community.

President Clinton is a great President. He has been a good President for schools, for the environment, for the economy, for health care and for the well-being of the ordinary citizen of this great and diverse nation. As the leader of the free world, he pushes for peace and reconciliation throughout the world while demonstrating that force can and will be used as a last resort as he is doing today. It is tragic that we bring this matter before the people's House at a time when our men and women in uniform are engaged in military action on distant shores. Some may question the timing, but it is the mark of Bill Clinton's presidency that he does what is right at the right time.

I say all of this because no matter what we may hear, President Clinton's record as a leader is important factor in this debate. The energy to remove him is motivated by discontent and disdain for Bill Clinton just because he occupies this office. And for me, his record of achievement must be considered against any proof of harm to the Constitution, to our system of government and to our country if we are to remove him. And based on my review of the facts, I conclude that his offenses, as wrong as they are, are not a threat to our system of government and simply do not rise to the standard of impeachment outlined in the Constitution.

With weighty and eloquent words, we have been told that this is a matter of conscience; that members of this body should vote their conscience based upon their understanding of the Constitution and the charges presented against the President. But this view of conscience is a limited one. One can only vote their conscience if they have the conscience of the Republican majority leadership; if they accept only the majority's view of the Constitution and only if they accept the majority's view of the charges and possible options available to deal with the matter.

Members are being asked to vote yea or nay on the articles of impeachment. To vote your conscience is to vote yea or nay on their view of what is Constitutionally permissible, to vote yea or nay on their view of the punishment. Despite the reality that members of this body, members with as good a conscience as any one here, may be willing to vote for censure, this option is not within the conscience of to the majority. Despite the fact that the majority of the American public, that it is to say the conscience of a majority of Americans, wants censure included and, in fact, passed as the ultimate remedy of this procedure, censure is not an option.

Yes, this is a vote of one's conscience, but only if your conscience is exactly that of the Republican majority. The debate today will not allow for the one option, that of censure, which meets the conscience of most Americans. Today's debate does not include all options and if fundamentally unfair and a blemish on this nation's democratic tradition.

Yesterday's session began with a prayer of St. Francis of Assisis; let us truly bring light to darkness and allow all options to illuminate these proceedings and allow every member a vote which reflects their conscience.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS).

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, there is no joy sometimes in upholding the law. It is so unpleasant sometimes that we hire other people to do it for us. Ask the police or judges. It is tiring and thankless. But we know it must be done, because if we do not point at lawlessness, our children cannot see it. If we do not label lawlessness, our children cannot recognize it. And if we do not punish lawlessness, our children will not believe it.

So if someone were to ask me, ''J.C., why did you vote for the articles of impeachment?'' I would say I did it for our children. How can we tell our children that honesty is the best policy if we do not demand honesty as a policy? How can we expect a Boy Scout to honor his oath if elected officials do not honor theirs? How can we expect a business executive to honor a promise when the chief executive abandons his or hers?

Whether it is a promise or a truth or a vow or an oath, a person's word is the

firm footing our society stands upon, and the average kid understands that. They do not need a grand jury to enforce it. They say ''cross your heart, hope to die''; ''pinkie promise''; ''king's X''; ''blood brother.'' These are the childhood instincts that seek to draw a line between the honest and the dishonest, between the principled and the unprincipled.

Ask the children. The kid who lies does not last and they do not bicker over what is and what is not a lie. They know. So do I. So do the American people.

Time and again, we wanted the essence of truth and we got the edges of the truth. We hear, ''Let's get on with the business of our country.'' What business is more important than teaching our children right from wrong? Some say it is all about politics and party lines. If that were true, I would have given in to popular opinion. But what is popular is not always what is right.

Some say polls are against this. Polls measure changing feelings, not steadfast principle. Polls would have rejected the Ten Commandments. Polls would have embraced slavery and ridiculed women's rights.

Some say we must draw this to a close. I say we must draw a line between right and wrong; not with a tiny fine line of an executive fountain pen, but with the big, thick lead of a Number 2 pencil. We must do it so every kid in America can see it.

The point is not whether the President can prevail, but whether truth can prevail. We need to cease the cannibalizing of Members of Congress. We need to cease the attacks on the President and his family because, friends, this is not about the President of the United States. He is not the injured party. Our country is.

In this moment, our children's future is more important than our future. If our country looks the other way, our country will lose its way.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 4½ minutes.

Mr. Speaker, the record of the House on something as important as impeachment should be as clear and accurate as it can be, and after yesterday's considerable misstatements by Members of the majority, I rise to set the record straight.

Mr. Speaker, they say these articles show high crimes. The record of historians who wrote the committee say they are low crimes and do not justify the drastic remedy of impeachment.

As to Article I, impeachment is not justified. They say the President committed perjury in the grand jury, but the actual record is that he did not deny an inappropriate relationship with Miss Lewinsky during his grand jury appearance. They are complaining only because of a lack of specificity, if my colleagues can believe that, in the President's testimony about who touched who and where and when it happened.

They claim that there is a clear and convincing evidence of grand jury perjury, but ignored is the panel of experienced prosecutors who testified that no reasonable prosecutor in the land would have brought a perjury case arising out of these facts.

As to Article II, the impeachment is not justified. They say the President's testimony deprived the plaintiff, Paula Jones, of her day in court. Not so. The record shows that a Federal judge ruled three times that Monica Lewinsky's allegations were not relevant to the core issues of the Jones case and refused to permit the Jones lawyers to pursue the allegations.

□ 1015

They say the President lied when testifying about his understanding of the definition of sexual relations. The record shows that three lawyers and a judge spent a half an hour debating the meaning of that contorted phrase, with the judge concluding, ''I am not sure Mr. Clinton understands all these definitions anyway.''

They say the President perjured himself when he testified to the truthfulness of the Lewinsky affidavit. The record shows that Ms. Lewinsky stated that her denial of sex was not untruthful because she defined sex as intercourse.

As to the third article of impeachment, it is not justified either. They say the President obstructed justice by, one, asking Ms. Lewinsky to lie in the Jones case; two, engineering the return of gifts he had given her; three, trying to buy her silence with a job; and, four, directing Ms. Currie's testimony.

The record is that Ms. Lewinsky stated over and over again that the President never asked her to lie. She said this in the grand jury and in her written statement. The record shows that Ms. Lewinsky and not the President or Ms. Currie initiated the return of the gifts. The record shows that the President gave her more gifts after she had been subpoenaed. The record is that the job search began months before Ms. Lewinsky showed up on the witness list in the Jones matter. The record shows that the President made no extraordinary effort to get her a job. The record shows that Ms. Currie was never a witness on any list. Ms. Currie testified no fewer than 9 times and stated repeatedly that she did not feel pressured by the President's remarks.

Finally, to article 4, the President, they say, abused his power by failing to answer the 81 questions. But the record shows the President answered the 81 questions completely, but that the alleged abuse of power lies in the fact that the majority disagrees with the answers. The majority has simply tried to dress up its perjury allegations in the clothes of the Watergate's abuse of power language, and I know something about that, in an effort to make its case against the President seem more serious.

They say the President has to be impeached to uphold the rule of law, but we say the President cannot be impeached without denigrating the rule of law and devaluating the standard of impeachable offenses.

Mr. Speaker, during the course of our proceedings, President Clinton's attorneys rebutted each and every charge of impeachment leveled against him. If there is any doubt as to that the Members should review the following materials (which are hereby incorporated by reference):

1. Preliminary Memorandum of the President of the United States Concerning Referral of the Office of the Independent Counsel and Initial Response of the President of the United States to Referral of the Office of the Independent Counsel, Communication from the Committee on the Judiciary, 105th Congress, 2d Session, House Document 105–317 (57 printed pages).

2. Submission by Counsel for President Clinton to the Committee on the Judiciary of the United States House of Representatives, Impeachment Inquiry Pursuant to H. Res. 581, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, 105th Congress, 2d Session, Committee Print Serial No. 16 (404 printed pages).

Memorandum Regarding Standards for Impeachment dated October 2, 1998, transmitted with cover letter addressed to Chairman Hyde and Rep. Conyers dated 10/2/98 signed by Charles F. C. Ruff, Counsel to the President, and David E. Kendall of Williams & Connolly (31 typed pages, published House Judiciary Democratic Web Page).

4. The testimony of the witnesses called by the White House including in particular the fourth panel called by the White House on December 9th dealing with prosecutorial standards (Thomas P. Sullivan, Richard Davis, Edward Dennis, Jr., and William F. Weld). (Printing forthcoming).

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I can make this speech, but I am going to try.

Believe it or not, I have been very depressed about this whole proceeding. When I came to work yesterday, it really hit me what we were about to do. But after this morning, it made me realize even more what this is all about. I feel great about it, because no matter how low we think we are or depressed we are, this country shows us time and time again how great it is.

There is no greater American in my mind, at least today, than the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOB LIVINGSTON) because he understood what this debate was all about. It was about honor and decency and integrity and the truth, everything that we honor in this country. It was also a debate about relativisim versus absolute truth.

The President's defenders have said that the President is morally reprehensible, that he is reckless, that he has violated the trust of the American people, lessened their esteem for the office of President and dishonored the office which they have entrusted him, but that it does not rise to the level of impeachment.

What the defenders want to do is lower the standards by which we hold this President and lower the standards for our society by doing so.

I cannot in good conscience, after watching NEWT GINGRICH put the country, his caucus, his House above himself and resign, and I cannot stand before you watching BOB LIVINGSTON put his family, and I hope you will think about his family, his friends, his House and his country above any ambitions that he may have. He thought he could do a good job as Speaker. I think he would have. But for some it is no longer good enough to make a mistake, confess that mistake and accept the consequences of that mistake and change the way you live your life and keep moving and make a contribution to this country. I think you ought to think about that, both sides.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will proceed. We will elect another Speaker. This country will be better for it. I cannot say this strong enough: This is God's country, and I know He will bless America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The Chair announces that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) has 14 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) has 15 minutes remaining.

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute and 30 seconds to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), an outstanding member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I am even more depressed today than I thought I would be yesterday. I believe the resignation of the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LIVINGSTON), while offered in good faith, was wrong. It is a surrender, it is a surrender to a developing sexual McCarthyism.

Are we going to have a new test if someone wants to run for public office: Are you now or have you ever been an adulterer? We are losing sight of the distinction between sins, which ought to be between a person and his family and his God, and crimes which are the concern of the State and of society as a whole.

On one level we could say, I suppose, that you reap what you sew, but that gives us no joy, and it gives me no joy. I wish that the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LIVINGSTON) would reconsider, because I do not think that on the basis of what we know he should resign. But the impeachment of the President is even worse. Because, again, we are losing the distinction, we are losing track of the distinction between sins and crimes. We are lowering the standard of impeachment.

What the President has done is not a great and dangerous offense to the safety of the Republic. In the words of George Mason, it is not an impeachable offense under the meaning of the Constitution.

As we heard from the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the allegations are far, far from proven. And the fact is, we are not simply transmitting evidence, transmitting a case with some evidence to the Senate, as evidenced by the fact that we already heard leaders in this House say he should resign. God forbid that he should resign. He should fight this and beat it.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. COX).

Mr. COX of California. Mr. Speaker, we are gathered here to deal with a problem that none of us wants and we are agreed upon much more than we admit.

The censure resolution, not the articles of impeachment, but the censure resolution states that William Jefferson Clinton has violated his oath of office, damaged and dishonored the presidency, engaged in reprehensible conduct with a subordinate and wrongly obstructed discovery of the truth. This debate, therefore, is not about whether the President has abused his office. He has. And both Democrats and Republicans acknowledge it.

Some have said we should not deal with this question now while our troops are in the Gulf. It might be added that they are also in Bosnia, in Kosovo, and nose to nose with North Korean soldiers in the DMZ. A quarter million American soldiers are positioned at trip wires of global conflict, and they will be there long after this debate ends. They are protecting our freedom and our democracy. It is for them as much as for any Americans that Congress meets today.

Every one of our soldiers is held to a code of conduct. None of them could keep his or her job, the privilege of being ordered into battle, if they had committed the crimes of our Commander in Chief. For committing just the underlying acts, the so-called personal elements of the Commander in Chief's offenses, the Clinton administration has prosecuted no fewer than 67 American officers and enlisted men and women. Hundreds of Americans who have served their country in the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marine Corps have lost their careers, even though they did not once lie under oath to a judge or to a grand jury or obstruct justice or tamper with a single witness. They were dismissed because of a more simple reason: They failed in their duty.

Every single man and woman in operation Desert Fox at this very moment is held to a higher standard than their Commander in Chief.

Let us raise the standard of our American leader to the level of his troops. Let us once again respect the institution of the presidency. Let us see to it indeed what the censure resolution says merely in words, that no man is above the law. Let us not fail in our duty. Let us restore honor to our country.

□ 1030

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN), a distinguished member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, my God, what kind of country are we becoming? What kind of institution are we becoming? This process of impeaching the President of the United States has been partisan right from the start. An Independent Counsel spends 4½ years investigating a President and sends a one-sided report to the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Republican members of that committee put their stamp of approval on it in very, very partisan hearings and send it to this body.

One party should not have the power to impeach a President of the other party. It's wrong. How can they do it? Both parties have to participate if we are going to impeach a President of this country. And at the same time one party is going to impeach a President of the other party, our men and women are engaged in active combat at this hour.

This couldn't wait until Monday? God help our country. God help America.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), the distinguished majority leader.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, no Nation has been so blessed as America in the 1990s. We enjoy a prosperity that our parents and our grandparents could not even imagine. Each day we invent wonderful new things to make life easier and more interesting. Our scientists are uncovering the wonder of God's creation, from the secrets of our genes to the wonders of the universe.

The social problems that have caused so much pain and worry are diminishing. Crime is dropping. Welfare dependency has plummeted. Unwed teenage pregnancy rates are finally dropping. Religious belief and attention to decent moral values are on the rise in this great country.

Even abroad America is respected as the world's one remaining superpower. We have triumphed over the vile tyrannies. Democratic nations on six continents owe their elected governments to our example and to our support. We have never been safer. Our brave armed forces, though they certainly need more resources, are still unquestionably second to none, a fact we can all agree is being demonstrated today in the skies of the Persian Gulf.

How did this great Nation of the 1990s come to be? It all happened, Mr. Speaker, because freedom works. As Americans, we know that when we allow ordinary people the freedom to help each other for their common benefit great things happen. And in this land they certainly have.

But freedom, Mr. Speaker, freedom depends upon something, the rule of law, and that is why this solemn occasion is so important. For today we are here to defend the rule of law.