



## House Republicans Ponder the “I-Word” (Impeachment) for Obama

The Republican congressman who walked out during President Obama’s State of the Union address January 28, Rep. Steve Stockman of Texas, has [announced](#) that he is considering filing articles of impeachment against the president.

“I could not bear to watch as he continued to cross the clearly defined boundaries of the Constitutional separation of powers,” Stockman said in a statement he issued following the president’s speech. He also posted the statement on his Senate campaign website, where he asked voters to register whether they are for or against impeaching the president.

“Obama defiantly vowed not only to radically expand the reach of government from cradle to grave, but to smash the Constitution’s restrictions on government power while doing it. His goal is to eliminate our constitutional republic,” Stockman said. “Last year I said I would consider impeachment as a last resort to stop Obama’s abuse of power. And, quite frankly, we’re running out of options.”

Stockman has arranged for all 435 members of the House to receive a copy of *Impeachable Offenses: The Case for Removing Barack Obama from Office* by Aaron Klein and Brenda J. Elliott. The books have been donated by the publisher, WND Books. Klein has described the book as “the first draft of articles of impeachment.” The long list of charges it describes include the shipment of guns to Mexican drug cartels in the Justice Department’s “Fast and Furious” operation; the U.S. and NATO 2011 bombing campaign in Libya without congressional approval; granting de facto amnesty to millions of illegal aliens by executive order; and the use of Department of Homeland Security’s Fusion Centers, together with the National Security Agency’s collection of e-mails and phone call records, to put the nation under surveillance.

The “Fast and Furious” sting operation, which has been linked to [the shooting death of a U.S. border guard](#), is one of the Justice Department actions cited in the impeachment charges 11 House Republicans filed against Attorney General Eric Holder last November.

“There’s a lot to look at and I think, at some point, if the smoking gun leads to the White House, we have to take action,” Stockman told WND.com. The Texas representative, who has launched a long-shot Senate primary campaign this year against incumbent John Cornyn, is not alone among House Republicans in raising the specter of impeachment. *Washington Post* opinion writer Dana Milbank published a [column](#) in December about a meeting of the House Judiciary Committee in which the “I-word” was discussed.

“We’ve also talked about the I-word, impeachment, which I don’t think would get past the Senate in the current climate,” said Rep. Blake Farenthold (R-Texas), a committee member who said he





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believed there would be enough votes in the House to pass articles of impeachment. Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) was reluctant to use “the word that we don’t like to say in this committee, and I’m not about to utter here in this particular hearing.”

“I don’t think you should be hesitant to speak the word in this room,” Georgetown University law professor Nicholas Rosenkranz testified at the hearing. “A check on executive lawlessness is impeachment.”

Rep. Michelle Bachmann (R-Minn.) has accused Obama of “impeachable offenses.” Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) warned last year that Obama could be impeached if he carried out his implied threat to intervene militarily in Syria’s civil war without congressional approval. Rep. Bill Flores (R-Texas) predicted that if the House were to vote on it, it “would probably impeach” the president.

Republicans in the House, where they are in the majority, are not likely to push for impeachment, however, given the unlikelihood of the Democratic Senate voting to oust the president. Even if Republicans should win control of the Senate in this year’s elections, they would face a considerable uphill battle to gain the two-thirds vote required by the Constitution for removal from office. Charges in Congress that a president has abused his constitutional authority often fall on partisan lines. Republicans, who were mostly silent when Democrats voiced outrage over George W. Bush’s signing statements, indicating what parts of a new law he would not enforce, now find their protests over Obama’s revisions of the Affordable Care Act — granting exemptions and postponing implementations of various provisions by executive order — fail to resonate with their Democratic colleagues. Members of the Republican minority in the Senate have protested, to no avail, over what Senator Ted Cruz of Texas has called Obama’s “lawless” acts.

The committee also heard from George Washington University law professor Jonathan Turley, a frequent critic of Obama’s interpretations of the president’s powers under the Constitution. In an opinion piece published in *USA Today* last March, Turley argued that actions taken by Obama exceed the offenses for which the House Judiciary Committee voted articles of impeachment against President Richard Nixon in 1974.

“Nixon’s use of warrantless surveillance,” Turley wrote, led to the creation by Congress of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, establishing a court with authority to conduct secret proceedings and issue warrants for investigations in national security cases involving persons suspected of acting as foreign agents. Last year the Obama administration won a favorable Supreme Court ruling by arguing that potential targets of government spying “had to have proof they were spied upon before filing suits, even if the government has declared such evidence to be secret,” Turley wrote.

While the impeachment articles against Nixon included the charge that he usurped congressional authority with his invasion of Cambodia, Turley noted that Obama bypassed Congress to intervene in Libya’s civil war and proceeded to bomb that nation’s capital and destroy military units, spending more than a billion dollars in the process. The law professor compared Nixon’s ordering of a burglary to gain damaging evidence against Daniel Ellsberg, who made public the classified Pentagon Papers, to Obama’s actions in ordering the killing of a U.S. citizen in Yemen for collaborating with al-Qaeda. “A recently leaked memo argues that the president has a right to kill a citizen even when he lacks “clear evidence (of) a specific attack” being planned.” Turley wrote.

Nixon’s Justice Department invoked the Espionage Act of 1917 in an unsuccessful prosecution of Ellsberg, but Obama has brought twice as many Espionage Act prosecutions than all previous



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presidents combined, said Turley, adding that while refusing to prosecute anyone for torture in CIA interrogations of terror suspects, the Obama administration has prosecuted a former CIA employee for *disclosing* the torture program.

Obama has “claimed the right of the king to essentially stand above the law,” Turley told the representatives at that December hearing of the Judiciary Committee. That prompted Rep. Trent Franks (R-Ariz.) to reach further back in history than the Nixon scandals to find a comparison to an overreaching monarch. The powers claimed by Obama “could be considered royal prerogatives,” Franks said, “which is, if my history’s right, what we had that little unpleasantness with Great Britain about.”



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