



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on April 22, 2019

Trump Impeachment: the Democrats' Third Rail?

The response to Democrat presidential candidate Senator Elizabeth Warren's [demand](#) on Friday that the House "should initiate impeachment proceedings" against President Trump was no doubt disappointing to Warren. Seeking to bolster her position among the 17 other candidates vying for the position as front-runner for the Democrats in the run-up to the 2020 president election, she sent out a series of tweets on Friday:



To ignore a President's repeated efforts to obstruct an investigation into his own disloyal behavior would inflict great and lasting damage on this country, and it would suggest that both the current and future Presidents would be free to abuse their power in similar ways.

The severity of this misconduct demands that elected officials in both parties set aside political considerations and do their constitutional duty. That means the House should initiate impeachment proceedings against the President of the United States.

Warren was the first candidate to take advantage of the openings left by Special Prosecutor Robert Mueller in his report on Russian interference in the 2016 president elections. Wrote Mueller: "Congress has authority to prohibit a President's corrupt use of his authority in order to protect the integrity of the administration of justice.... The conclusion that Congress may apply obstruction laws to the President's corrupt exercise of the powers of office accords with our constitutional system of checks and balances and the principle that no person is above the law."

Warren had support from Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.):

Mueller's report is clear in pointing to Congress' responsibility in investigating obstruction of justice by the President.

It is our job as outlined in Article 1, Sec. 2, Clause 5 ["the House shall have sole power of impeachment"] of the U.S. Constitution.

As such, I'll be signing onto Rashida Tlaib's impeachment resolution.

But even Ocasio-Cortez recognized the political reality and the risks of doing so: "While I understand the political reality of the Senate + election considerations, upon reading this DoJ report ... I cannot see a reason for us to abdicate from our constitutionally mandated responsibility to investigate. Many know I take no pleasure in discussions of impeachment. I didn't campaign on it & rarely discuss it unprompted."

There's a website and a petition already in place — "Impeach Trump Now" — with nearly 1.5 million signatures calling for the president's impeachment, along with 10 reasons why:

- Obstruction of justice;
- Violations of both the foreign and domestic Emoluments Clauses;
- Conspiring to solicit political contributions from foreign governments;



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- Advocating illegal violence and giving aid and comfort to white supremacists and neo-Nazis;
- Abusing the presidential pardon power;
- Threatening nuclear war against foreign nations;
- Directing law enforcement to investigate and prosecute political adversaries;
- Undermining freedom of the press;
- Cruelly and unconstitutionally imprisoning children and their families; and
- Making and directing illegal payments to influence the 2016 presidential election.

The only trouble is that the “political reality” mentioned by AOC is giving anti-Trump Democrats reasons to pause and reflect. On Friday the Reuters/IPSOS poll found that while half of those polled think that the president “or someone from his campaign worked with Russia to influence the 2016 election,” just 40 percent think that he should be impeached while 42 percent said he shouldn’t be.

Representative Jerrod Nadler (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, agreed that obstruction of justice would be impeachable but only “if proven.”

This is in line with the warning issued by the Gray Lady of the Democrat Party, the New York Times, on Sunday: It’s better to waffle or remain silent altogether over the issue of impeachment rather than run the risk of having his impeachment by the House reelect the president in 2020. Once Warren tripped the wire by announcing her support for impeachment, the Times wrote that “most of the other 17 Democratic president candidates have responded to the special counsel’s report with tentative remarks ... demands for the unredacted Mueller findings, calls for further hearings ... or to simply chang[ing] the subject.”

The Gray Lady warned: “Most of the candidates feel no pressure to demand Mr. Trump’s impeachment because they simply do not hear a mass clamoring for it on the campaign trail [and] in their polling impeachment is not a priority for the party’s voters.”

At least two contenders were happy to take the Gray Lady’s advice. “Mayor Pete” Buttigieg waffled: “I’m pretty sure [Trump] deserves to be [impeached], but Congress will have to figure procedurally what to do.” Former Representative Beto O’Rourke took a similar path: “I wouldn’t blame any member of the House for voting for this.”

The Times warned that “support has waned in recent months” for impeachment, noting that a “nonchalant reaction from the vast majority of Mr. Trump’s party only reinforces ... many Democratic activists’ [position] that impeachment would be fruitless.” The Times quoted Representative Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.): “If we impeach Donald Trump, he would never be convicted in the Senate.... He would [then] be able to campaign all around the country saying, ‘I’ve been acquitted!’”

The president agrees. He tweeted that investigations leading to his impeachment “will cost the Dems big time in 2020.” Just as it did when the shoe was on the other foot in 1998. President Bill Clinton was under investigation leading to his impeachment, and the Republicans were expecting to pick up at least 30 seats in the House in the midterm elections. Instead, they lost five seats, while Clinton’s polling numbers topped 65 percent despite his behavior that most found despicable.

Warren is the first of the Democrat Party’s presidential candidates to touch the third rail (“touch it and you die!”) of impeachment. If the other candidates follow the Times’ warning, she may just be the only one.



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