

Holding Power Accountable

July 25, 2019

Dear Representative:

On behalf of Common Cause's 1.2 million supporters, we call on Congress to immediately begin an impeachment inquiry into President Donald J. Trump because no American, and especially not the President, is above the law. The President and his Administration's continual obstruction of justice by ignoring subpoenas, subverting congressional investigations, and refusing document requests leaves Congress no choice but to begin an impeachment inquiry.

In the 243 years since our country's founding, Congress has impeached two sitting presidents with neither president being convicted by the Senate and removed from office. Impeachment is not a measure that Common Cause takes lightly, and in our nearly 50 years, this is the first time we have called for an impeachment inquiry for a president. We strongly feel that the current president's actions have reached a tipping point that must be addressed with the most significant investigatory tools that the Constitution prescribes.

The Mueller report revealed substantial new evidence that Trump's campaign team actively encouraged, aided and abetted this Russian interference in the 2016 election to help Trump get elected. The Mueller report also suggests that President Trump has obstructed justice, perhaps in as many as ten instances, in order to prevent Special Counsel Mueller and the American people from learning the full extent of the Trump campaign's involvement in Russia's 2016 campaign interference.

As Congress has conducted investigations into Russian election interference and the Trump campaign's involvement, as well as Trump's obstruction of justice and other potential malfeasance (e.g., violations of the Constitution's emoluments clauses, tax fraud, and ethics violations), the Trump Administration has engaged in unprecedented stonewalling. Common Cause believes it is well past time to hold President Trump accountable for his behavior and push Congress to do its constitutional duty to protect our country from the president's abuses of power, obstruction of justice, campaign finance violations and his failure to ensure faithful execution of our laws—actions that may well constitute high crimes and misdemeanors.

Further, court documents unsealed July 18, 2019, indicate that the Department of Justice (DOJ) possesses strong evidence that President Trump coordinated with his former attorney Michael Cohen in the commission of multiple felony violations of federal campaign finance laws through "hush payments" to Stormy Daniels and Karen McDougal immediately prior to the 2016 presidential general election—felonies for which Cohen is presently serving a three-year prison term. Yet the DOJ has ended the investigation with no explanation.

To this end, Common Cause, on behalf of our 1.2 million members, calls for an immediate inquiry of impeachment in the House of Representatives to fully investigate these myriad issues with public

Since 1970, [Common Cause](http://www.commoncause.org) has been working to hold power accountable through lobbying, litigation, and organizing. Our non-partisan, pro-democracy work has helped pass hundreds of reforms at the federal, state, and local levels. We now have 30 state chapters and more than 1.2 million members around the country who are working to strengthen our democracy.



hearings and to determine if President Trump should be impeached and removed from office. The American public must be able to learn about the President's actions through televised public hearings. Public impeachment inquiry hearings are critically important to centralize the investigation in one venue so all Americans can see and hear the truth in the public spotlight.

To be clear, Common Cause is **not** calling for the impeachment of President Trump. We believe an inquiry of impeachment is necessary at this time and reserve judgment on the question of whether President Trump has committed impeachable offenses. While the House of Representatives has launched many committee investigations to provide oversight of the Trump Administration, these investigations have limitations in the face of the Trump Administration's obstruction and abuse of power. We are grateful to the House leadership for taking their investigative duties seriously, but we believe that the House would be in a stronger legal position to overcome the Trump Administration's obstruction and abuse of power if the House were conducting an impeachment inquiry through the exercise of its general oversight efforts.

Constitutional experts overwhelmingly agree that Congress' power to conduct investigations and force compliance with subpoenas is at its pinnacle when the subpoena is related to impeachment proceedings, because the Constitution explicitly vests the power to impeach with the House of Representatives. By contrast, Congress' general oversight authority is only an implied power in the Constitution, so federal courts are not as likely to enforce these subpoenas as those that carry the force of an impeachment proceeding behind them.

Americans deserve to know the full truth about the Trump administration's efforts to obstruct the Mueller investigation into Russia's campaign to help elect Donald Trump to the presidency. They deserve to know the full truth about the impact of the President's denial of the past and ongoing Russian threat to the integrity of our elections. And they deserve to know whether the President and members of his inner circle committed felony campaign finance violations. It has become alarmingly apparent though, that without a significant course change, the American people will not be given the full truth. It is time for a congressional impeachment investigation because Americans deserve the truth.

The attached report details the bases for Common Cause's call for an impeachment inquiry. We reached our decision after significant deliberation. Please let me know if you have any questions about our enclosed report or would like to discuss how we arrived at this conclusion.

Sincerely,



Karen Hobert Flynn
President
Common Cause