

IMPEACH TRUMP NOW

Transcript of Impeach Donald Trump Now Tele-Town Hall February 13, 2017

Call Speakers: John Bonifaz, Co-Founder and President of Free Speech For People
Ron Fein, Legal Director of Free Speech For People
Bri Holmes, Digital Media Strategist of Free Speech For People
Norman Solomon, Co-Founder and Coordinator of RootsAction

Call Transcript

John: Welcome everyone. My name is John Bonifaz. I am the Co-Founder and President of Free Speech For People. Welcome to tonight's telephone town hall with the campaign to Impeach Donald Trump Now. The purpose of this call is to bring you up to date on what is happening with this campaign, since Free Speech For People and RootsAction jointly launched it moments after the president was inaugurated on January 20th and to give you ways to get further involved. We need your help to help build and win this campaign, as we have stated at the outset in launching this campaign, nearly one month ago. This campaign is about holding the president accountable for his serious and direct violations of the United States Constitution, the Foreign Emoluments Clause and the Domestic Emoluments Clause, for seeking to enrich himself and profit off of the Oval Office at the public expense. This is an unprecedented level of corruption that we are facing today of the presidency. The impeachment process is a process by which we will hold the president accountable. We are seeking an impeachment investigation to be started in the United States Congress and more than 850,000 people across the nation have joined now in calling for this. We have three speakers for tonight's telephone town hall and then we'll be opening it up for your questions. First, Ron Fein, Legal Director of Free Speech For People will lay out the grounds for impeachment and impeachment investigation. Next, Norman Solomon, the co-founder and coordinator of RootsAction, our organizational partner in this campaign will talk about how you can get further involved. Then finally, Bri Holmes, the digital media strategist at Free Speech for People, will focus specifically on how you can help online in pushing this forward via social media and via your friends. So first, I'd like to turn it over to Ron Fein, Legal Director for Free Speech for People.

Ron: Thank you. As you know, President Trump displays a casual indifference to the law in general, but nowhere is this more striking than in his corruption of the presidency, by using the Oval Office for his private profit. So, in our call for an impeachment investigation, we focused primarily on two provisions of the United States Constitution, where we have the strongest evidence that President Trump is in violation and just as importantly, that these violations are grounds for impeachment. I'm going to talk briefly about both aspects. When we talk about the corruption of the presidency, it's easy to

get bogged down in technicalities, like the word emolument. As a lawyer, I'm happy to do that. The big picture that we need to bear in mind is that it is not only unconstitutional, not only immoral, but fundamentally corrupting of the republic for the President of the United States to be profiting from the presidency at public expense. He's doing that in many ways, but two categories violate specific provisions of the Constitution. The first category is taking money from foreign governments. The founders of the Constitution were quite concerned about federal officials receiving payments from foreign governments, and they put a clause in the Constitution known as the Foreign Emoluments Clause or sometimes the Foreign Corruption Clause, that specifically prohibits that type of arrangement. The second category is enriching himself from the Federal Treasury. The founders of the Constitution may not have anticipated every angle of the president's grift, but they did perceive the general danger. The Constitution has a clause, known as the Domestic Emoluments Clause, or sometimes the Presidential Compensation Clause, that says that the president receives a fixed salary set by Congress for his term and not a penny more. President Trump's insistence on holding onto ownership of his businesses means that he violates one or both of these provisions nearly every day by taking money from foreign governments in his various buildings and by funneling federal taxpayer money to rent space, whether it be in Trump Tower, Mar-a-Lago, or his other businesses. Not every violation of the law, or even every violation of the Constitution is actually grounds for impeachment. The Constitution says that the president can be impeached for treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors. It's ultimately up to the Congress to determine what are high crimes and misdemeanors, but as we've cited in the legal analysis, on the impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org website, the founders of the Constitution were actually quite clear on this point. In fact, one of the leading founders who was confronted at the Virginia Constitutional Ratifying Convention with the argument that the president of this new republic might be influenced from payments from foreign powers responded by citing the two provisions of the Constitution that I've discussed. Then he said, and I quote, "If discovered, he may be impeached", and that's where we are now. I want to close with a note that the examples of impeachable violations that we've cited in the legal analysis and that I've talked about right now, that we launched on inauguration day, may not be the end of it. In the coming weeks we'll be working with our distinguished legal advisory board, which you can see on our website, to update that analysis, considering what President Trump has done so far in office. Of course, once an impeachment investigation is launched, Congress may decide to expand the scope. Thank you and I look forward to your questions later.

John:

Thank you, Ron Fein. Before I introduce our next speaker, Norman Solomon, I do want to remind everyone that we are eager to take your questions. We want to hear from you tonight. If you'd like to ask a question, please press zero on your telephone keypad, and you'll be connected directly with one of our volunteer operators. Again, press zero to ask a question. Now we will hear from Norman Solomon, the Co-Founder and Coordinator of RootsAction.

Norman: Hi everybody. This is so much about the principle of democracy, that when the people lead, the leaders will follow. But, of course, the leaders need a push, and in this case you're going to need the big push from the grassroots and that's where all of us on this call come in. It's very fitting that we're doing this call now because next week, every member of Congress is on recess. Almost all of them go home. That's where we come in, everywhere we live. We can organize people in our Congressional district to speak with our Congress member about impeachment. We can call the district office. We know the Congressperson is home. We can comment on their Facebook page, tweet. We can get people together, request a meeting, attend any public forum we hear of or a town hall. This can be a historic turning point if we turn out, if we get a hold of our friends and neighbors, people we work with, people we know who are concerned about the violations of the Constitution by this president. Also, I want to remind everybody on the call here, that as we participate, really in making history, it's important to avail ourselves of the resources that we have pulled together on the website impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org. If you go to the site and you click on the 'Take Action' section, there's a model resolution you can use. That's already there to adapt for local elected officials who you may know, but you certainly can get to know if you don't, city councils, county commissions, every student body governments, town councils, state legislature. It's already a model resolution on the site at impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org where you can put forward a proposed local resolution and then hold their feet to the fire and encourage them to speak out for constitutional integrity for no corruption in the White House, in short, in this situation, for impeachment. You can just click on the hotlink that says click here for our model resolutions. A couple other quick points. One is that the website has a lot of other useful material. It makes a very detailed case for impeachment complete with footnotes for anybody you know who's interested, perhaps even skeptical. You can share that link, on the case for impeachment. As I mentioned, 'Take Action' has a lot and also resources that we can avail ourselves of. Finally, I want to mention something very exciting. In less than 72 hours, on Thursday morning, Impeach Donald Trump Now is holding a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington. We now, as John mentioned, we have 855,000 signers on the website. We'd like to go into Washington at that news conference, then later in the day when the petition is formally presented to members of Congress on Capitol Hill, we'd like to have even more. That's one of the ways you come in. With the many people around the country, every state is represented in this call. It's possible that we can get above 900,000. It's even possible we can get above a million, but that's where you come in. You can take action via Facebook, Twitter, other social media, via email, every which way you can to help us get there. In a minute we're going to hear from Bri, who will give us some details. Thanks a lot to everybody.

John: Thank you, Norman Solomon. I do want to remind everyone, we're receiving some great questions. If you would like to ask a question, please press zero on your telephone keypad and you'll be connected directly with one of our volunteer operators. Again, press zero to ask a question. Our last speaker before we turn it over to the Q&A session is Bri Holmes, Digital Media Strategist for Free Speech For People. Bri, go ahead.

Bri:

Great. Thank you, John and thank you, Norman. So Norman spoke to a lot of great ways that you can get involved. I'll keep it short and follow up on that. With the help of some online organizing and a very active social media presence, we are building a national movement from the ground up. We are so glad you could join us tonight. It's a true testament to the organizing power of the internet, of social media, and of this movement. As we mentioned earlier, in just over three weeks we've gathered 855,000 signatures. More than 6,700 of you signed up for this call. It's just amazing. A huge part of that success can be credited to the work that we're doing online. So many of you have already shared our work, a video that we posted online, we're talking millions of hits, countless retweets and shares. We need you to stick with us and keep sharing. It's such a simple easy way that we can keep reaching that message. As Norman mentioned, our goal is to reach one million signatures. We are well on our way. We've assembled some easy actions that you can take, that are on our website. We will be getting in touch with you soon with more information on how you can reach out to your representative. A quick note, and that's important, to make sure you're receiving all of these updates, we need some of our Gmail and email users to do us a big favor and that's to go into your inbox when you have a chance and make sure you add us to your contacts. Gmail is great at filtering out spam, but we are here to inform you, not to troll you. Unfortunately, there's enough people already doing that on the internet. So that's one thing you can do right now to help us. Just add the Campaign to Impeach Donald Trump to your inbox or your contacts. If you don't see us, maybe your email provider decided we're on spam already and that's not good. Just do us a favor and double check. If you're on social media, we want you to follow along with us on Twitter @impeachdtnow or on Facebook. You can find all those pages on our website. We are constantly updating and answering questions. You can message us there directly, if you have a concern, if you want to find out how to get plugged in, if you have a great skill that you want to volunteer with us, please send us a message. We will respond. We are humans and people and we will reply to you as quickly as possible. We also invite you to check in frequently on our 'News and Updates' section for more information about events. Just a lot of news that we capture there. Another point to add to that is that we are organizers and activists. We are stretched across the country, I'm here in Los Angeles. There's so much ground to cover and we're counting on all of you to help us get the word out. The places we can only reach you is social media. That means, like Norman said, sharing us where you can online. It also means that we need some of you to have those conversations for us face-to-face, to take those resources from the internet, bring them into the everyday. If you go onto our website impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org/takeaction you'll see those ways. We also have a downloadable and printable petition. For this campaign to be successful, we need you to be talking to supporters face-to-face. You can use that to collect signatures, to talk to people. There's instructions at the bottom of what you do once you gather some names. We're also gearing up to launch a video campaign that you can get involved by tagging us. We'll share some of those videos to our page. We'll make sure to follow up with that, as well as an email with information on how you can specifically target

those representatives in an effective way, including best practices for reaching out. Finally, at the end of this call, all we hope is that you will find five friends and share this message with them all online. You can go to our website. We've made it really easy with some pre-written posts. You just have to click the share button. If those five friends share this with five more friends and five more friends...you get the idea. We'll start sharing online and we'll be right at a million signatures in days. Thank you for your time.

Please Tweet us, Facebook message us, email us info@impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org. We look forward to keeping this conversation with you and we thank you for all the work that you're doing.

John: Thank you so much, Bri. Thank you all for being on this call and for joining us at impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org and this campaign. As Bri highlighted, we are seeking to get to the million mark in days. We are headed to Washington on Thursday. We need your help to help us get there as we deliver the first round of signatures in less than a month's time in this campaign to members of Congress. We'll soon be opening it up for the first question, but I do want to say we have a first poll question for all of you, to get your interaction and ideas. Here is the poll question, what most concerns you about President Trump's impeachable offenses? Press one, if it's because he's violating the Constitution. Press two, if it's because his conflicts of interest mean he will not be serving the American people. Press three, if it's because he's using the Oval Office to make money for himself. Press four, if it's because his actions if unchecked will set a dangerous precedent. Press five, if you are concerned about all of the above. I'll repeat that, and again, pressing any of these numbers will keep you on the line, but we're eager to get your thoughts on this question. What most concerns you about President Trump's impeachable offenses? Press one, if it's because he's violating the Constitution. Two, if it's because his conflicts of interest mean he will not be serving the American people. Three, if it's because he's using the Oval Office to make money for himself. Four, if it's because his actions if unchecked will set a dangerous precedent. And five, if you are concerned about all of the above. Thank you for participating in the poll. For your information, nearly ninety percent of you say five, you are concerned about all of the above. We are too. Our first question goes to Tracy in San Diego. Tracy, go ahead.

Tracy: Hello. Thank you for your work in this very important endeavor. I would like to know the exact procedure to have the impeachment occur and what your sense of its possibility is given the majority Republican House.

John: Yes, well, I'll start with the first piece and then hand it over to Norman on the political possibility of it. The procedure is that an impeachment resolution needs to be introduced.

We have a proposed resolution on our site at impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org. It needs to be passed by a simple majority of the House of Representatives to go forward with this investigation. Then, ultimately, if the House Judiciary Committee finds through that investigation that there should be Articles of Impeachment introduced, those Articles of Impeachment get voted on first by the Judiciary Committee, then by a simple majority of the House before it gets moved over to the Senate for the trial and a conviction if, in fact, the Senate decides to convict. You need two-thirds of the Senate to convict, a simple majority of the House to start the impeachment process. Norman, do you want to answer the question on the political side of this?

Norman: Yes, thanks, Tracy. Well, I did some research again recently and I think it's really relevant that when Richard Nixon was facing impeachment, the 38 members of the House Judiciary Committee ended up including seven Republicans who voted for impeachment. Of course, Nixon being a fellow Republican, they were under, those seven who voted to impeach him on that committee, were under tremendous pressure to not do so. That pressure was outweighed by the grassroots organizing and pressure from their own constituencies. There are so many Republicans, quite a few anyway, in the House, or in what's known as purple districts. They're going to be afraid of losing their next election if they don't follow what they come to understand as the will of the people. That's where we'll come in.

John: Wonderful. Thank you, Norman. Our next question is from Sheila from Los Angeles. Sheila go ahead.

Sheila: Hi. So, I really, really appreciate you taking the lead in this organization, firstly. It was my...I read that the ACLU in addition to another organization of a different name, the day after he was inaugurated, filed the papers to start the process. Are you going to enjoin on that? Are you going to do your own? Now that's three lawsuits. That's my question.

John: Thank you. Thank you, Sheila. I'll turn that question over to Ron Fein, our Legal Director at Free Speech For People to answer.

Ron: Yes, thank you. There's been a lot of litigation against President Trump in just the first few weeks. The organization that filed the lawsuit against him under the Foreign Emoluments Clause is called Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, or CREW for short. They filed a case the first Monday after he was inaugurated, in Federal Court, alleging that he's received payments from foreign governments and that this violates the Foreign Emoluments Clause of the Constitution. We are in touch with the folks at CREW. We support this litigation. We hope it will succeed. We view it as complementary to the impeachment campaign and ultimately, we believe that President Trump needs to be removed from office and impeachment is the mechanism that the Constitution provides for doing that. In terms of the ACLU's litigation which focused on the immigration executive order and the fallout that came from that, I think

that as time goes on, we're going to see even more different types of constitutional violations coming out of President Trump. As I said earlier, I think that the scope of the impeachment campaign may widen at some point, but for now we think that a plurality of approaches is the best approach. Impeachment is the means for actually removing him from office.

John: Great. Thank you, Ron. Our next question is from Brian from Sterling Heights, Michigan. Brian, go ahead.

Brian: Yes. Okay. I want to know, because I want to get involved locally here in my community. Do you have affiliate organizations that you partner with or do you have chapters in various, the states and cities? RootsAction and your organization where people can actually locally get involved? Anything along those lines?

John: Great question, Brian. I'll turn that over to Norman first, and then also to Bri in terms of how people can get involved locally. Norman, go ahead.

Norman: Yeah, there aren't really chapters of the pair of organizations that are co-sponsoring Impeach Donald Trump Now. What we're doing as a strategy is that, already the 850,000 people who have signed this petition, everybody did so, virtually with their zip code so we know which congressional district that they live in. As time goes on, we are going to be hiring field organizers and so forth, we're able to knit together and communicate with people who are living in different congressional districts. I would say in many ways, that's secondary to what the people on this call and others who have signed the petition can do, because it really is up to people who live in those districts. You know your neighborhoods and your communities better than anybody else. You know who's active. You know who's concerned. I'd encourage everybody on the call to contact people you know. Call a meeting. Contact your congressperson. Do that organizing and then keep us informed in terms of the national organization about what you're doing so we can share that information with others.

John: Bri, do you want to add to that?

Bri: I think that covers the top lines of it. The next stage of this is just making sure that all of our friends, our co-workers, our colleagues, everyone has signed on, that they're following us, that they're plugged in for updates. As Norman said, it's really going to be up to us to make this push with our representatives. As we saw with the Women's March, it was something that really just started out as an idea on Facebook and it just grew exponentially. If we can capture that momentum online, even if it's you creating an event on Facebook and getting your friends together to either write letters or to call your representative, or to show up at their office, feel free to get creative. We're here to support you. You can reach out to us directly. We'll do our best to plug what you're doing, to offer advice, and really we just want this to be an open conversation. Just think of our social media outlets as that, as a way for you to directly reach out to us.

John: Yeah, this is John Bonifaz, and I'll just add that another very important resource that we would love to have people use is our model resolution on our site. The 'Take Action' page at impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org, which we are urging people to pass in their local communities. Get your town, city council, local county commission on record calling on Congress to take this action. It will be a great way to demonstrate to Congress the public demand for this. We're ready to go to our next poll question, which is actually very related to the question we just heard, how would you like to volunteer, join the campaign to impeach Donald Trump? Press one, if you will volunteer. Press two, if you will call your member of Congress. Press three, if you will talk to your friends and family. Press four, if you would like to learn more about other things you can do. So, I'll go back over that. How would you like to join the campaign to impeach Donald Trump? Press one, if you will volunteer. Press two, if you will call your member of Congress. Press three, if you will talk to your friends and family. Press four, if you would like to learn more about other things you can do. It's very helpful to have your answers on that and we're ready to go to our next question, which I believe, Joyce in California is our next questioner. Joyce, go ahead.

Joyce: Yes, I'd like to ask a question about if we are successful in impeaching Donald Trump, do we have any, is it any better with Mike Pence being our president? If not, would we be able to impeach him as well? Even if he doesn't have any offenses in emoluments?

John: Norman, do you want to answer that question first?

Norman: Yes, that question is the single most frequently posed one about this entire impeachment scenario. I think the answers have several layers. First, is that when you have a president who is above the law, in this case, above the supreme law of the land and gets away with it flagrantly, that undermines the very basis of democracy. Simply on that principle, if we were to allow President, this president, Trump to get away with this, thumbing his nose and flagrantly violating the Constitution, then we're well on our way, one could say, to the absence of democracy and even towards dictatorship. That's one layer. The other is a more practical layer, and again, the Richard Nixon example, when he was forced from office is instructive. In political terms, the party whose president is impeached becomes splintered. We should keep in mind, and remind others that the only way under the current composition of the House and Senate for this president to be impeached and then kicked out of the White House, is if substantial numbers of Republicans vote to impeach and then in the Senate, which requires two-third votes, 19 Republican Senators vote to get rid of him, to convict him and exclude him from the presidency. Just imagine what that would do to the Republican Party. It would set them back on their heels. They would be bitterly divided. Some would be loyalists for Trump. Some would have directly, by vote in Congress, have had a hand in his demise as president. Historically we know that that party, in this case the Republican Party, would be put on the defensive, would lose a lot of ground in a way

that would have enormous repercussions for the Vice-President who then becomes president. He would be extremely weakened.

John: Thank you, Norman. I do want to remind everyone to press zero if you'd like to ask a question. We'd like to hear from you tonight and continue this conversation. I also want to remind you that we are eager to get your help at [impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org](https://www.impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org) and have you share via Facebook, via Twitter, via email to your friends and your family and your neighbors the petition we have online. We're eager to get to one million by Thursday when we go to Washington. We hope you all, will coming off of this call, will help us get there and reach that new milestone. Our next question is from Norma from Pennsylvania. Norma, go ahead.

Norma: Good evening. Yes, my question has to do with the petition's delivery to the House of Representatives. I wondered if you had targeted anyone in particular who is willing to receive it? I'm sure you're likely aware that Representative Gerald Nadler from Manhattan introduced a resolution of inquiry to the House Judiciary Committee last week on Trump and his business interests in the Russian connection and if he may be someone to consider.

John: Thank you, Norma. Thank you for that question. I'll go ahead and answer that in that we are very much in conversations with a number of congressional offices, including many who are on the House Judiciary Committee, which is the committee of jurisdiction for this impeachment investigation resolution that we seek to have introduced. Our hope is that one or more of members of the House Judiciary Committee will be introducing that resolution, but we are not solely doing outreach to members of that committee. We are reaching other members as well. We are very hopeful that one or more will be receiving our petition signatures on Thursday. We're currently in contact with those offices. Representative Nadler of course, is on the House Judiciary Committee. He's the second ranking member there on the Democratic side and he did introduce that important resolution inquiry which many regard as a potential first step toward an impeachment investigation. Our next question is from Brad in Brooklyn. Brad, go ahead. Are you there Brad? We may need to come back to...

Brad: Hello?

John: Yes, there you are. Go ahead, Brad.

Brad: Hi. Thank you for taking my question. We were reminded that Congress is on recess next week so there are going to be a lot of town hall events. I plan to attend the town hall for my house representative. Since impeachment proceedings start in the house, my question is for those of us attending these town halls. What one question would you like us to ask our representative to sort of encourage them to take the lead on this initiative or be on board with this initiative?

John: Bri, do you want to start us off there in terms of what you think people should be asking at town meetings and other visits when the members of Congress are back in their home districts?

Bri: I think Norman might have the better answer.

John: Okay, go ahead, Norman.

Norman: You know, it really ties in with what Brian was raising in his question a few minutes earlier. That is, that the constituent power is what it's all about. When people stand up at a town meeting, for instance, a town hall that's often, in many cases convened by the Congressperson, and say, "I'm a constituent. I'm a voter. I'm active and I'm wanting to ask you as a crucial question, do you support the beginning of an impeachment inquiry, a formal inquiry by the House of Representatives and are you willing to introduce such a resolution?". If you don't get a yes, then the immediate follow up question I think could be along the lines of, "Well, why not? What's it going to take? When can we have a meeting at your office to discuss this? I've got a couple or a couple dozen or more friends who'd like to sit down with you and talk this out. We have some background information we'd like to hand over to you." As a footnote to all this, again, remembering the earlier discussion, I want to mention that anybody on this call who convenes a meeting and event, who can have a few days notice to organize some sort of public statement in favor of impeachment, please let us know, because then we can send that information to people in your zip coded area, within a radius of who knows how many miles, but inside your congressional district so that there will be a feedback loop and we can help you promote your event.

Bri: Exactly, that's what I meant earlier too about keeping that line of conversation open and using us as a tool and a megaphone for your local organizing.

John: Great. Wonderful. Thank you both. Our next question is Mather from Washington, D.C.

Mather: Yes. Good evening. This is Mather here. Thank you for taking my question.

John: Mather, I'm sorry. Thank you. Go ahead.

Mather: That's no problem. Yes, I'm asking a very specific question as someone who lives in Washington, D.C., but I would suspect I'm not the only on this call or the only one who has this question. That would be, based on your experience in this kind of work, what is the best way for residents of the District to let Congress know our opinion about this, given that we have a non-voting representative, or at best a half-voting representative. I mean often, at times, I've seen things that say call the Senate leader, call the House Speaker, but I'm not really a constituent of theirs. Are they going to listen to me? Any thoughts or feedback you might have about that, I'd be very interested in.

John: Yes. Thank you for your question. Ron Fein, do you want to answer that?

Ron: Yes. I'd be happy to. In the District you have a delegate, Eleanor Holmes Norton who is a long time civil rights advocate and while she is not able to vote on final passage of legislation, she is actually able to introduce legislation. I think that she could be a good candidate for introducing or supporting the impeachment investigation and I think that there's no reason that you shouldn't make the same types of calls to her as somebody in any other part of the country wouldn't to their own representative, even if on the final vote she's not able to cast a deciding vote.

John: Great. Thank you, Ron. I just want to remind everyone that we would like to hear from you. If you would like to ask a question, please press zero on your telephone keypad and you'll be connected directly with one of our volunteer operators. Again, press zero to ask a question. We have a lot of questions tonight. The next question comes from Regina, from Lake Grove, New York. Regina, go ahead.

Regina: Yes, hi. I also want to thank you for all your work. I'm so grateful that there's an organization like yours doing this. My question is, besides the obvious violation of the Emoluments Clause, the fact that Trump asked the Russian government, Putin, to hack Hillary Clinton's emails. It's one thing that they actually did it, but the fact that he openly invited them to do it, practically begged them to do it. Is that any violation of the Constitution and also additional grounds for impeachment?

John: Again, thank you for your question. Ron Fein, do you want to answer that?

Ron: Yes, these developments that we're learning more and more about, about President Trump and potential involvement with the Russian government in the election are extremely disturbing and in fact, we at Free Speech For People actually filed the complaint with the Federal Election Commission, which is an independent investigative agency within the United States government that doesn't answer to the president in the hope of developing more evidence that is outside the control of this administration. As more information about that develops and other grounds for impeachment develop, we are going to look into expanding the grounds for impeachment. We started off with what we knew were the strongest from an evidentiary standpoint, but we are definitely going to be open to considering expanding the grounds and we're going to be working actually in the coming weeks with a Legal Advisory Board that we formed of some leading scholars, which you can see at our website, in revising the analysis in light of what's happened over the last several weeks.

John: Great. Thank you, Ron. Our next question is from Tom in College Park. Tom, go ahead. Are you there Tom?

Tom: Oh there I am, yeah.

John: Yes.

Tom: Thank you so much for everything you're doing. Very exciting to join this call and I'm excited to get to work. I'd love to lead something locally and I think it's so important. We should have an organization in every congressional district. I look forward to having that more developed. My specific question is about the press conference on Thursday. If you are trying to get people out to it, because I too am in the D.C. area and also wondering if you have reached out to those in Congress who have been vocal about impeachment. There are a few. Jamie Raskin, here locally, Maxine Waters from California, Gerry Nadler from New York, Mark Pocan from Wisconsin, have all either introduced motions or spoke publicly about impeachment. Have you reached out to them yet about maybe joining the press conference or another way supporting what you guys are doing?

John: Thank you, Tom. I'll answer that yes, we have been in touch with several of those offices and others. Our hope is that there will be participation by one or more in either a press conference or petition delivery on Capitol Hill. Norman, do you want to answer the question about attendance at the press conference?

Norman: Sure. We're really working hard to get as many journalists and camera people and reporters there as possible. That's really the priority for the news conference. We're looking at down the road, doing a public event in the nation's capitol that would be an activist event, but our priority now is to get the word out to the public and we want to fill the room with journalists.

John: And I do want to just come back and Tom, let you know, and any others on this call, that if you're interested in volunteering, please do reach out to us at info@impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org. Email us. Let us know that you're available to volunteer. We very much want the local organizing to move forward. It will be very, very helpful to be in touch with you directly about that, particularly around the model resolutions. So, our next question I believe our next question is going to come from Terry Hart in Salem, Oregon. Terry, go ahead.

Terry: Yes. Can you hear me?

John: Yes we can.

Terry: Okay, real quick, I just joined a group called #resist on Meetup. It's on the internet. It's a place where originally you could go and meet up with people to do other things. I just wanted to let everyone know that that might be an option for them. My question is, his taxes, we just heard a 1924 IRS code that his taxes could be asked for and reviewed for the Emoluments Clause. However, I just heard today that the Ways and Means Committee will not ask for it. What can you guys do about that?

John: Thank you. Ron Fein, do you want to answer that question?

Ron: Yeah, I think stepping back, there are a number of tools that can be used to help further develop the evidence that can lead towards impeachment. One of course, is the impeachment investigation itself. Others are these different techniques for getting his tax returns or the resolution of inquiry that Representative Nadler introduced. Of course, the litigation that I mentioned that was filed by the CREW organization and I think that all of these should be pursued, actually, until we succeed. It's the type of thing where we're warned and given an explanation and we persist. Eventually, one of these methods will break through. I think ultimately these should all be viewed as tools building towards the impeachment process. Ultimately, getting the tax returns is an important step in gaining more information about President Trump's business dealings and there may be some pretty serious revelations that come in the tax returns. It's not the end game. The end game is we believe he needs to be removed from office.

John: Great. Alright, our next question is from Phyllis in Boston. Phyllis, go ahead.

Phyllis: Hi. I, like everyone else am very grateful for all that you're doing. My question is this, are the words and the actions of his administrative team things that we can use in our effort for his impeachment? For instance yesterday, on several of the Sunday morning talk shows, Stephen Miller basically said, "You will not question. You will not ask. The president has full authority. The United States is on notice that you will not ever question this president." He also went on to say things like, "Sean Spicer says the truth 100 percent of the time." I actually felt like I was living in a dictatorship yesterday morning. So all of that to say to say, are the words and actions of the people he has put at 1600 Pennsylvania, are those other indicators we can use of his total lack of any sense of our Constitution, or the role of the President of the United States in this impeachment effort?

John: Thank you, Phyllis, for your question. Ron Fein, do you want to answer that?

Ron: Yeah, I mean, the president has appointed some surely horrifying people to some senior positions within the administration. I think when one of them, whether it be Stephen Miller or any others does these things, what's important to remember is that our goal is not simply to have that person fired. That would obviously be one step, but our goal is that we've got to keep our eye on the ball, which is the president. In some cases, it may come down to the old question of what did the president know and when did he know it? If a subordinate does something illegal on his or her own, that's very different than if they did it on the president's instruction. We, at this point, may not have all of the evidence needed to make those links, but an investigation from Congress would be a great way to get that type of evidence.

John: Thank you, Ron. I want to remind everyone to press zero if you would like to ask a question. We're getting a lot of questions tonight, thousands of people on this call

tonight, which is very exciting. Our next question is from Cathy in Fort Worth, Texas. Cathy, go ahead.

Cathy: Thank you. And again, I also appreciate everything that you're doing and I know you appreciate the efforts of so many across the United States, really making a stand and working as well. My question is, if all three branches of the government literally go dark, no one will vote for any of these things. Do we have no recourse as a democracy or citizenry against the refusal to even accept or listen to the citizenry by those three branches?

John: Thank you. Norman, do you want to answer that question from Cathy?

Norman: Yes, I think Cathy is pointing to what's at stake. I think as we go out to our Representatives and everybody in our communities, it's important to keep that in the foreground. That really democracy, or dictatorship is what we see ahead with a sort of a fork in the road. It's not hyperbole to say that the very existence of democracy or the potential of dictatorship hangs in the balance. That's where impeachment is a crucial tool for us to prevent outright and total catastrophe.

John: Thank you, Norman. I couldn't agree more. Our next question is from Sonia in Salem, Oregon. Sonia go ahead.

Sonia: Hi. Thank you for taking my call and thank you for everything you're doing. I have a question about Trump's salary. He has said that he will not take the presidential salary, that he is only going to take one dollar a year. My question is two parts. One, is that method of payment going to be a factor in an impeachment? Could it be? The other question is, considering that it would be logical that his loyalty would be with whomever is paying him, and that would not be us, would there be an investigation and could this kind of speed up the impeachment process?

John: Thank you, Sonia. Ron Fein, do you want to answer that question?

Ron: I think you provided all the important considerations in the question itself. First of all, when President Trump says he's not going to take a salary, or when he says a lot of things, it's always good to take it with a grain of salt. The truth is that the founders of the Constitution wanted the president to be dependent on the people alone and they provided in the Constitution itself that Congress is to give him a salary that can neither be increased, nor decreased during his term in office, so that he's got a fixed salary. It's a nice salary. It's \$400,000 a year plus expenses that are separately covered in an expense account. We don't want the president to be in the situation where he's saying, "No, no, no I don't want the salary," and then raising money on his own, whether that comes from guests staying at the Mar-a-Lago Resort or foreign governments renting space in Trump Tower. We want the president to have his salary and enjoy it and use it, rather than take income from outside sources. So, an investigation should get at this

issue and find out whether he is taking income from anywhere else. What I certainly can say is that if he is getting income from a foreign government, it violates the Foreign Corruption Clause, and we know some of that already. When he's getting extra money from the US Treasury above and beyond the \$400,000 salary, that violates the Presidential Compensation Clause. These are grounds for impeachment and an investigation would be, again, be a great way to uncover more of the details of what's going on there.

John: Thank you, Ron. I do want to remind everyone that we have a few more minutes for this call. If you have a question, please feel free to press zero to ask a question. We'd love to hear from you. Our next question is from Avery in Seattle. Avery, go ahead. Avery, go ahead.

Avery: Hello?

John: Yes.

Avery: Yeah, thanks for everything you're doing. It's fantastic that you're doing it.

John: Thank you.

Avery: I'm wondering, there seems to be a gap between the groundswell of people out here in the citizenry and congressional leaders, or Congress in general. Which of these people, there have been some names that have come up, which of the legislators is most prone for helping with the impeachment? That is one of my questions. The other one is, how can this progress be expedited? Is this going to take a long, long time? Is there a way to speed it up?

John: Okay. Thank you. I'll turn that question over to Norman first, but Bri also if you want to answer on how people at the grassroots level can put the pressure on, but first Norman, go ahead.

Norman: Yes, I think there's a huge gap between where people are at in this country in terms of impeachment specifically, for instance, and the if you will, when you take the temperature at Capitol Hill. At this point, we have empirical evidence. The Public Policy Polling Organization, very highly respected, polled about three weeks ago now, whether people in the United States, this is registered voters of all parties, it's not just one party, do you support impeaching President Trump? Three weeks ago it was 35 percent. Then, the next week it was 40 percent. Last week it was 46 percent, dead even, support or oppose impeachment. Now if you were to overlay that to the members of the House of Representatives, you basically have a 100 percent to zero, in terms of inaction or at least up until now, not declaring support for impeachment. It's really a historic moment we're in. Whereas has been the case so many times in American history, the people on Capitol Hill and along Pennsylvania Avenue are resistant to what

people at the grassroots want to do. That sort of goes to the other question, the way to expedite this is to fight like hell for impeachment. Everything, all the legal, non-violent tools we have of persuasion and organizing and activism and speaking out and media, everything we have at our disposal, we need to do it. That comes down to every neighborhood in every community.

John: Wonderful. Bri, do you want to add to that?

Bri: Sure. I think Norman gave a great answer. Also, just a quick shout out to everyone that's been tweeting us. I've been trying to respond to some of you, and on Facebook too. Thank you for doing that right now. To add to Norman's note, yes we have to use every tool in our power, especially in the local parts of this. Part of that is writing op-eds, writing letters to editors, getting out there, if you have a farmer's market, if you have a place you go and you know that your community members will be there to talk to you, show up there and try to insert yourself into the conversation. Let others know that you care about this. Show up, get your friends to go to some of these town hall meetings and be there in person. Organize these events on Facebook. Use some of those free, easy tools to just keep that momentum up. None of these reps like it when their constituents show up and make them face who the people are that they're representing. Sometimes they do, and sometimes that pressure is enough to say, "Hey, there's people who are going to give us hell if we don't start acting on behalf of the voters." Just show up there and use some of those tools. Write to your local paper. Email, bug the hell out of your representatives until they start paying attention.

John: Fantastic. Thank you, Bri. Our last question is going to be from Doreen from New York. I do want to say that we've had a number of calls tonight, a lot of questions. While we couldn't take everyone's question, we will certainly want to hear your questions. You can leave a voice mail by simply staying on the line at the end of this call, in order to leave your question. Doreen from New York, go ahead.

Doreen: Hi, yes. Thank you for holding this town hall. It's been very inspiring. My question is, my local Congressman, who is in my district refuses to hold any town hall meetings at the present time. I've even sent an email asking him when does he plan on holding one, because his constituents have questions and that he can't back away from it. So, I guess, my question is, how do we get the local representatives to hear us if they're not going to hold these town hall meetings?

John: Norman, do you want to answer this question from Doreen?

Norman: Yes, it's a key question. Sometimes, as the saying goes, when the mountain won't go to the people, the people need to go to the mountain. Every Congressperson has at least one congressional district office. It's our prerogative to go to that office, whether it's one of us or ten of us or one hundred of us and say that we want a dialogue. I think

the onus is on that Member of Congress, especially if he or she refuses to hold a public town hall, then we've got to go to them.

John: Thank you, Norman. Thank you all for joining us tonight for this first tele-town hall of this campaign at impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org. We need all of your help to help build and win this campaign. I do want to remind you as Norman stated, all the ways you can get involved are on our take action page of our site at impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org, including helping to distribute our petition, downloading the petition, to go into your community to get people to sign, to urge people to sign it online, sharing it via Facebook, via Twitter, via email to your friends, to join us on our Facebook accounts impeachdtnow, both at Twitter @impeachdtnow and Facebook, as well as our model resolution which we urge you to download from the take action page. Go to your local community and have it be passed there. Have your local community be on record calling on Congress to take this action. Of course, as Norman just highlighted, visit your member of congress's office there in the district and urge that he or she take this action of calling for an impeachment investigation. We also welcome your efforts to volunteer on this campaign, to reach out to us. If you have other ways you would like to get involved, we need your help throughout this country. This is going to be a people-powered movement that wins this campaign and it's going to be because of all of us working together. We also welcome any gift you can make, a donation to support this work going forward. You can find the donate button on our site at impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org. We are thrilled to be working with you in this critical moment for our country, this unprecedented level of corruption of the Oval Office. John Dean, Nixon White House council said this is far worse than Watergate. This president is engaged in direct and serious violations of the Constitution. He must be held accountable via the impeachment process. Thank you for joining us for this call. We could not, unfortunately, get to every question, but if you have additional questions and would like to learn more about how you can be involved, feel free to again join us at impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org. Also, stay on the line at the end of this tele-town hall and you'll be able to leave a voicemail. We will get your question, your comments via the voice mail that you leave. Thank you all, again. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this critical campaign for our Constitution and for our democracy. Good night.