

Why Impeachment?

Talking Points

While impeachment is a very serious step that should not have been trivialized the way it was during the last presidential administration, it is also an indispensable part of a system of checks and balances that sustains our democracy. When strong evidence exists of the most serious crimes, we must use impeachment or lose the ability of the legislative branch to compel the executive branch to obey the law.

This is not a question of supporting one party over another, but of upholding the rule of law over both of them. The Democrats will resist impeachment of Bush and Cheney as fiercely as the Republicans until the people of the country force it on them. And we are not doing so to promote a party, but to protect our democracy.

Our democracy and the values we uphold are endangered. Open government has been replaced by secrecy. The rule of law has become the rule of the presidential signing statement in which one man rewrites the laws passed by our elected representatives.

Bush and Cheney have seized powers that belong to Congress, and have done so by intentionally misleading Congress and the American people about the fictional threat from Iraq, about spying on us without court approval, about torturing, and about shredding our civil liberties.

The following charges warrant impeachment proceedings:

1-Intentionally misleading Congress and the public regarding the threat from Iraq in order to justify a war against Iraq, and intentionally conspiring with others to defraud Congress in this regard. These actions are not just criminal in a rhetorical sense. They are felonies, violating the federal anti-conspiracy statute and the False Statements Accountability Act.

More on these crimes: <http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/?q=node/5>

Evidence that Bush knew his statements were false: <http://www.davidswanson.org/?q=node/474>

2-Ordering the National Security Agency to conduct electronic surveillance of American citizens without seeking warrants from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review, as required by law, specifically, Title 50 United States Code, Section 1805. Bush has openly confessed to this crime but claims to have the right as president to commit it. The right of a president to secretly violate the laws of Congress, while lying to the public about it, does not exist in the US Constitution. The right of the same president to continue his criminal behavior after it's discovered is also not to be found in US law.

3-Conspiring to commit the torture of prisoners. Bush and Cheney say they do not torture. The evidence overwhelmingly says otherwise. This crime violates the "Federal Torture Act" Title 18 United States Code, Section 113C. It also violates the UN Torture Convention and the Geneva Convention, which are U.S. law under Article VI of the U.S. Constitution, which makes treaties ratified by the US part of US law.

4-Ordering indefinite detention without access to legal counsel, without charge, and without the opportunity to appear before a civil judicial officer to challenge the detention, all in violation of U.S. law and the Bill of Rights.

This page of additional talking points answers these four questions:

http://www.impeachbush.tv/args/points_pol.html

Isn't it political suicide to call for impeachment?

Why call for impeachment when the Republican majority will just vote it down?

Why not wait until after the November 2006 election when Democrats may have a majority in Congress?

But won't we just end up with Cheney as President and he is worse than Bush?