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Your Turn
Alan Garfield
Guest columnist

The Senate voted. Now it's our turn to vote Trump out

You didn't have to be in the room where it happened to know that Donald Trump ordered his minions to withhold aid from Ukraine until that country investigated the Bidens.

Every sentient being — that includes every Republican senator — has known the truth from the moment the smoking gun transcript of the "perfect call" was revealed.

We knew this shake-down was not only consistent with Trump's character but was also to be expected from an individual who knows of no interest — not love of country, not commitment to truth, not reverence for democratic institutions — other than his own.

The President's defense team, faced with the impossible task of refuting these incontrovertible facts, instead tried to bury them in an avalanche of claims about procedural irregularities and gobbledygook constitutional arguments.

But nothing could suppress the smell emanating from the underlying rot.

Adam Schiff, in a *tour de force* closing argument, held out hope that his colleagues would rise above politics and save our democracy from this dangerously immoral and corrupt leader: "I do not ask you to convict him because truth or right or decency matters nothing to him, but because we have proven our case and it matters to you."

But Schiff's hope was misplaced.

For Republican senators (other than Mitt Romney), there was a higher value than truth, right or decency. It was kowtowing to a vindictive leader that they were too afraid to challenge. In our contemporary version of "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," Jimmy Stewart's pleas fall on deaf ears.

So, where does this leave us? Were all the impeachment investigations, hearings and the trial in vain?

Hardly. The truth emerged, and that's what counts. We now know that Donald Trump was ready to undermine our national security and jeopardize an ally if it would help him personally. We now know that Donald Trump completely rejects our constitutional system of checks and balances, including congressional oversight.

Nor does this man, who lost the popular vote by more than two million votes, accept the check of free and fair elections. To the contrary, he publicly encouraged Russian intervention into the last election (and got his wish), and a day after Robert Mueller testified that his investigation had not exonerated Trump, he called Ukraine to coerce that country's leadership into helping him manipulate the next election.

Our system provides only one remaining check on this rogue leader: the American people.

Now that we know the truth about Donald Trump, we cannot allow any disinformation campaign, which is sure to come, to cause us to forget who he really is. And we must object every time a legislator or bureaucrat tries to suppress the votes of citizens who oppose Trump.

Most important, we must show up in overwhelming numbers in November so we can decisively defeat Trump. We must leave him no room to credibly claim that the election was rigged.

Only "We the People" can save our democracy.

As Alexander Hamilton observed, it has been "reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government upon reflection and choice." Should we answer that question in the negative, Hamilton warned, it would be not only our own misfortune but also "the general misfortune of mankind."

Let us not be the generation that allows history's greatest democracy to fail. Let us save our country by ridding it of a president who has threatened the nation's soul.

The impeachment of Donald Trump, regardless of its ultimate outcome, began this process. Americans can complete it on Nov. 3 when we let Donald Trump know, through his resounding defeat, that truth, right and decency do matter to us.

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