

Santa Rosa City Council's Impeachment Resolution

Public Comments

Speaker 1:

Good evening mayor and council members. My name is Ted Sexhauer (sp?) my residence is..., city of Sonoma. I am the co-president of Veterans for Peace, Chapter 71, we have something on the number of 30 members, paid up members in the city of Santa Rosa, and approximately 60 in the county, so I hope that gives me a little legitimacy to come and speak to you. I will speak strictly from a veteran's point of view. You'll see on my lapel here this is a combat medics badge, and I'm narrowing the scope of what I want to say down.

I'm particularly concerned about the issue of torture. It's, as is well known, this is a practice that not only harms those who are tortured, but those who practice the torture, and leads to a decline of moral standards all down the line following that.

The typical approach to this problem of saying, "Well it's a few rotten apples," in this case the apples are on the top of the barrel, and the rot is going down. We need to clear those rotten apples out.

On October 4th, 2007, New York Times article, a very long, 4,000 word article about the revelation of the secret law twistings that had been done, rulings that had been done within the Justice Department, following the denial... (timer sounds).

Moderator:

Thank you very much.

Speaker 1:

All right. May I say one more thing? If we, history is going to ask us, "how could you have known and not done anything?" It's so obvious that so much is wrong now. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Yes, Nicolas Sennalous (sp?) up here, thank you.

Moderator:

Sorry sir.

Speaker 2:

That's all right. I at ..., Santa Rosa. And, it is the obligation of the city council to be our voice, and I want to thank you for..., a month and half or so ago we came before you for this opportunity, so thank you for putting us on your agenda.

The evidence is overwhelming that the current administration is guilty of enough executive misconduct through its hubris, that impeachment is not only viable, it is in fact necessary. There isn't one American that hasn't been affected by the war in Iraq, yet today the same argument of going to war in Iraq is going on, right on, tonight, and the saber rattling by our president, is to try to get us to think about attacking Iran.

This is madness.

This man is a mad man. We have only one tool, and that tool is Impeachment. The NIA has even said there is no threat of nuclear weaponry from Iran, and yet the President sees nothing but a single-minded march to war: that's his answer.

This administration knows no restraint in its power. It has no sense of reason for using the detante, dialogue or unilateral actions in working with people. It chooses death, destruction, suffering, from the horrors of war, which none of its members have experienced, except that they gone hunting routinely. I submit, that behind these two oil men, Cheney and Bush, the real motive for establishing lasting presence is the Middle East is the greed and thirst for oil. Our country's military has been broken, the national debt is approaching 900 Trillion dollars....

(timer)

Whoops. I'm sorry, I'll make it quick. I beseech you as our voice to vote tonight the resolution on our behalf, to impeach Cheney and Bush, with their mismanagement, lies, and in competency, corruptions, etc., so on and so forth. Thank you.

Speaker 4:

Good evening` my name Catherine Woodford, and I pleased to have lived at ... for about nine years, and I thank the people who serve the city.

I have two points that I would like to make tonight.

First is a massive amount of published information available, that points to the malfeasance of the Bush Cheney administration. I wanted to bring a sampling of the books tonight, but the weight figuratively and literally is prohibitive. The books you can be sure are rigorously fact checked and gone over minutely by lawyers before publication. They're written by liberals and conservatives alike: the data is in. The authors described a consciously (????) conspiracy, that is, lies, to engage in the war against Iraq. When the sheer volume of this information is considered, we should all be open-mouthed in astonishment. It makes me fear for my country and our republic.

The second issue is the destructiveness of the Iraq invasion and occupation to the environment. While we in Santa Rosa brush our teeth with half a glass of water, recycle recycle recycle, and compost compost compost, the military is burning thousands of tons of jet fuel, spewing the noxious chemicals into the atmosphere, our atmosphere, and using depleted uranium and other toxics in the war.

War is the biggest polluter imaginable.

The cost to the planet is astronomical and the cost to your citizens in money and blood is tragic, and will be a burden for generations. Our sons and daughters who return may never recover.

Please help us petition our representatives by passing a resolution to impeach President George W. Bush and Vice President Richard B. Cheney tonight.

Moderator:

Thank you very much. The next speaker is Alice Waco, followed by Dr. William Simon.

Speaker 5:

I can almost say good morning to you.

Moderator:

It's getting close.

Speaker 5:

It's getting close. I'm Alice Waco. I do not represent the Peace and Justice Center tonight, but they did take a strong position on this impeachment also, and I live in the ... in Santa Rosa and it's the policehood. I'm going to skip the first paragraph, so hopefully everything else will make sense.

I'm talking about the expanded power that our President has given himself and Cheney, and it's going to be inherited by the next Presidency and will continue to expand, and it's going to reach into this community. So we have a job to do. It's not Lynn Woolsey's and Mike Thompson's job, it's our job, right here, at home.

The health of our local community is directly affected by the policies, directives, and actions of the President and the Vice President who deny, block and even alter scientific research, safety standards related to the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the pharmaceuticals....

The pollutants they throw at us are determined by the fraudulent pseudo-science promoted through the agencies they administer. At a hearing in the House, a government employee described what he called, "the editing of science mandated by the directives of this administration," and quotes aligning the facts to match the policy, rather than letting the facts drive the policy. This edited science gets incorporated into the standards of FDA and EPA.... It's too late to think....

This intentional manipulation, editing, and withholding information is used to drive the policies of Bush and Cheney. At the local level, there is an assumption that this data is accurate.

We have to investigate at a National level, like we do at a local level.

Moderator:

Thank you very much. Dr. William Simon followed by Dan Monty.

Speaker 6:

My name is William Simon, I live at ... and it's an honor to be here Mr. Mayor and council members, and I really appreciate the fact that I can do this here. I am Vice President of Veterans for Peace, and my goal has two prongs. One is to share the Veterans perspective on this, and also to point out that it is indeed a local issue, because the veterans do eventually come home.

Every war has two battlefields. There is the literal battlefield where the battle takes place, and there is the ongoing battlefield that is in the hearts and minds of the people that survive the wars, and that can be the civilians as well as military people.

I'm sure most of you know that 58,000 people, Vietnam veterans, died in Vietnam. What you might not know is that the VA estimates that 200,000 killed themselves after they came back to the United States, and that's a direct result of how they were treated, and how they were not treated. So, from a veteran's perspective, I think we need to support the troops by bringing them home as soon as possible, provide them with the care they deserve, and I hope that you will support this resolution to impeach Bush and Cheney, because they brought us this war, and they did on lies and deception, and I think you all realize that. Thank you for your time.

Moderator:

Thank you very much sir. To Dan Monty, followed by Miles Everett.

Speaker 7:

My name is Dan Monty, I live in Santa Rosa.... Mayor, council members, thank you for having us here

this evening, for your time now and the time you've given us before tonight.

Santa Rosans are fortunate indeed that we such a responsive council to the needs of the wishes and concerns of the citizens. That doesn't mean we always agree, but.... Although the resolution we are asking you to pass this evening does concern the impeachment of our President and Vice President, the real meaning of this evening is about the breakdown of our representative form of government. Santa Rosans are here tonight to let you and our nation know that we will not this dysfunction to continue.

This is not an anti-war resolution, as a recent news article has stated. This is a local issue, because the people are making it so. This resolution is the button you can push to inform our House of Representatives that their lack of action is harming our city. I apologize for using that same phrase that you had in the paper today so often.

We cherish our 230 year tradition as a nation. We Santa Rosans will not sit by idly and allow tyranny to take over this nation. Please pass this resolution tonight. Thank you.

Moderator:

That you very much Dan. Miles Everett, followed by Jim Stoops.

Speaker 8:

I'm Miles Everett, I live at ..., in Healdsburg. I am going to avoid repeating...

Moderator:

Thank you.

Speaker 8:

... the charges here. The point that I'm most concerned about is that Impeachment is terribly important because most Americans do not realize how bad this administration is. There will be volumes written, they're already underway, and there'll be many many more, that will outline just how bad this administration is, and how much damage it has done to the country.

Americans, though, can't wait for all those books to be written. We need to know about it now. The precedents are horrific, we need to be on guard against future implementation of the kind this administration has done, they have crippled our role in the world, they have..., the American President at this point, can you imagine what is his effectiveness in dealing with the problems in the world? He has no credibility anywhere in the world at this point. George Bush has reduced the American Presidency to a laughing stock.

We cannot afford to let these people off the hook. They need to be held accountable by the American people through the impeachment process, and they need to be removed from office, not just to allowed to fade away to Texas somewhere, but they need to be held accountable and we need to make it clear to the world that the American people will not stand for this kind of thing from our leadership. That's what impeachment is for, that's why it's so important that it take place. We cannot let these people fade away into the sunset, and hope that historians will catch up with all the infamies they have perpetrated. Thank you.

Moderator:

Thank you very much sir. Jim Stoops, followed by Kumari Sividas (sp??)

Speaker 9:

Mr. Mayor, City Council Members. It's an honor to be here. This is the first time I've ever done anything like this, but this has motivated me.

Moderator:

Would you state your name....a

Speaker 9:

I'm sorry, my name is Jim Stoops, at, in Sebastapool.

Moderator:

Thank you sir.

Speaker 9:

I think the greatest thing about this nation is our Constitution, and there are three qualities that make it so:

First, the balance between the Executive and Legislative Branches.

Second, the Bill of Rights.

And Third, Impeachment, which is listed in Article I, Sections 2 and 3, Article II, Section 4, six times in all.

I think that shows how important the founding fathers thought of impeachment. All the above features are being violated, the balance and the Bill of Rights are under attack as it never has been before. Over a thousand signing statements challenging the Legislature by the President has undermined this balance of power.

The heart of the Bill of Rights, Amendments I, IV, V, VI, and VIII have been decimated. Impeachment has been taken off the table. Imagine taking Article I, Sections 2 and 3 and Article II, section 4, off of the table! This is unimaginable.

This in itself is a violation of the Constitution. The leaders of the Executive and Legislative Branches are violating their oaths of office. What happens when our leaders commit crimes and are not held accountable? What message does this send to the American people..., and to the world? That crime pays? That the Constitution is just a damn piece of paper? What are succeeding Presidents going to do if they are not impeached?

Moderator:

Thank you very much sir. Kumari, followed by Mike or Miles, and I'm having trouble with the last name....

Speaker 10:

Hi, my name is Kumari Sivida, I live at, in Sebastapool. I am here tonight because I am deeply

distressed that our President and Vice President have repeatedly violated the United States law, and the Constitution, and are continuing to do so. They need to be held accountable for serious offenses that cannot be ignored.

Some folks say that is too late to start the impeachment process, Bush and Cheney will be gone soon, others say the process will take too long or be too expensive.

Too long? Nixon's impeachment took three months. Clinton's impeachment and trial took only four months, two in the House and two in the Senate.

Too expensive? For the sake of our democracy, our country, and our reputation and credibility around the world? We cannot afford not to begin impeachment proceedings. If we do not impeach Cheney and Bush we will establish that their illegal activities are permitted for future Presidents and Vice Presidents. The rest of the world will see, that our democratic government, based on checks and balances, is a sham.

Too late? Bush and Cheney have 412 days left in office, and can still do a lot of damage. People are dying everyday because of their policies. Bush and Cheney have...

violated Amendment V, VI, VII, VIII of our Constitution,

they have violated the United Nations Charter and the Geneva Conventions.

they have misled Congress and the public into war,

spied in violation of the law,

tortured and operated in secrecy.

Of the long list of impeachable offenses, only item needs to be proven, and Bush has already admitted to illegal wiretapping. We don't even need to have a trial.

What really breaks my heart is the damage this has caused in Iraq. One point two million dead, four million Iraqis displaced and their country devastated.

Three thousand eight hundred and eighty two of our soldiers dead, and thousands wounded, and traumatized for life.

I'm here to ask you tonight to ask that you stop these atrocities. If all that you've heard tonight aren't high crimes and misdemeanors, what is?

Moderator:

Thank you very much. Ah, Milo, followed by Helen Horn.

Speaker 11:

I'm Miles Curland ..., Santa Rosa. Six Hundred b.c., Anacarsis is speaking to Solon in Athens, and he says that the law is a cobweb, that catches small weak things, but allows more powerful things, like hornets and bees to pass through unimpeded. That's a pretty cynical statement. Solon did not believe him, and crafted laws that held for hundreds of years. The rule of law is paramount in our system. It's based on checks and balances, the interlocking power of the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches, and our President and Vice President have, as a matter of course, undermined this series of checks and balances between all the branches, from signing statements, that indicate that he won't abide by laws that Congress has passed to bind him, to circumventing warrants, getting records on our phone conversations from large telecoms, without warrants, claiming it's legal, this has never been done before, this is unprecedented. It shouldn't be allowed to stand.

Moderator:

Thank you. Helen Horn, by Kevin Conway.

Speaker 12:

I am Allen Horn, I live ...in the unincorporated area of Sonoma County. I am the Treasurer of the Santa Rosa Chapter of Veterans for Peace.

On September 8th, 1969, I enlisted in the United States military, I raised my right hand a swore to a solemn oath that I would defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. The fact that I was honorably discharged from the military did not change the fact that I am still bound today by that solemn oath, which is in fact my reason for speaking to you tonight.

When you assume the office of city council person, you took the same oath, and you are here tonight under that oath. Therefore, you have the legal and moral responsibility to carry out the laws of the United States, the Constitution, in addition to the laws of the State of California. Since impeachment is on the table by virtue of the United States Constitution, you have the duty to move forward on impeachment as our elected representatives. Although high crimes and misdemeanors are not defined in the United States Constitution, I will tell you that any war crime, such as the raping of the Iraqi women, the killing of innocent Iraqis, the creation of free fire zones, the use of radio-active munitions, and torture, rises to the level of a high crime.

And if these war crimes aren't bad enough, there is a crime which is even worse and more diabolical. I am talking about crimes against the peace. This is the highest crime any human being can ever commit. An example of such a crime is Bush and Cheney lying to the American people about weapons of mass destruction, lying to the American people about Sadaam Husein's connections to al Qaeda, and lying to the American people about who really attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. All these lies were told in order to justify waging an illegal, immoral, aggressive war against and Afghanistan.

It is time to impeach this President and the Vice President.

Moderator:

Thank you Allen. Kevin Conway followed by Donna Gallagher.

Speaker 13:

Kevin Conway ... Santa Rosa. Mayor Blanchard, Vice Mayor Pearce, Council members. I have decided to take the few moments of my Tuesday night to say a few words regarding this issue of impeachment, but first I want to thank you for the many Tuesday nights, and the many long hours that your devote in service to our community.

The fundamental character of our country, once so deeply respected around the world as the force for good, has been badly damaged. This war, secret prisons, torture, domestic spying, are serving not only to define how we are viewed, but they are serving to define who we are. My patriotism requires I do all I can to reverse this course. I have cast the votes, I written the letters, I have sent the money, but these efforts combined do not equal the measure of comfort I would get from knowing that this body, my local representatives, acted formally to condemn the unlawful and un-American policies of this administration.

This is the moment, and it will only come once. Please don't be hindered by a self imposed restraint on taking action of a national matter, when it comes to an issue of this magnitude. You speak for us, and we need you voice. Thank you.

Moderator:

Thank you sir. Donna Gallagher, followed by Diana Peterland.

Speaker 14:

Donna Gallagher, Rohnert Park, thank you so much for your time. I know it's late. The reason why I'm here, is because I can't watch my Pledge of Allegiance be changed to "One nation under surveillance." And you know, this isn't a painful request, because all we're really asking is for impeachment, not impalement.., I know, it's kind of late, I'm trying to wake you up.

As a former council person, I, we all, took the oath to protect the Constitution, from all foreign and domestic enemies. In fact, we took the oath only for that, not to do with environment, or development, so thanks for doing all other things too.

But who knew, who knew, that we'd be fighting a domestic enemy, you know, who would predict? You know the only promise that this President has kept is to export our democracy, you realize that, right?

Ok so, but the most patriotic thing you can do tonight is to actually take a roll call vote at the end of this session, and vote to send a message on to Congress that they do need to get going on impeachment.

And the thing I'm most concerned about is the conversation that it's not local. I was thinking earlier, Mr. Mayor, when they were talking about Police and Fire, and you're getting acknowledgement for how great they performed, well, at this moment, our Constitution shredding, law breaking President is cutting Homeland Security in half. That would be our Police and Fire. There's no way, we're not even ready for a disaster, I mean I'm wishing we had the National Guard a little closer. We're in trouble. I just took a disaster course, and the county doesn't talk that well together, and we're not equipped for the next earthquake. Where this is at is that we're just a Katrina situation away. So it is true, Mr. Mayor, also that the council, session after session, does resolutions or take trips to influence Washington and Sacramento; this is frequently something that you do.

All of these issues affect us locally, I know you ask for help at other levels, this isn't out of your purview to make this request tonight. Thank you so much.

Moderator:

Thank you Donna. And ah, welcome as a former council member from Rohnert Park to our chambers here.

Speaker 14:

I know, isn't this wild. We were all in class together in 1988, Leaders of Santa Rosa.

Moderator:

You were first. Thank you for your service there. Diana Peterland, followed by Marsha Boster Prey.

Speaker 15:

I am grateful for this opportunity. My name is Diana Peterland, I live at ... in west Santa Rosa. And I'm imploring the panel to please get behind the resolution to impeach. The extraordinary danger these men, George Bush and Dick Cheney, have put our country in, cannot be underestimated. Executive Branch controlling our government moves rapidly toward dictatorial power, and further danger for we the citizens and the world.

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