

[REDACTED]
Rye, N.Y., 10580
Dec. 23, 1998

Mr. Brian Lamb
C-Span
400 N. Capitol St., N.W. #650
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

CENSURE-SMENSURE !

Since when do you buy absolution by paying a fine and what purpose is served by censure - an easy way out?

Some Senators have publicly expressed their opinion that the President should resign. What we need is a roll call vote on exactly this issue - IN YOUR OPINION, SHOULD THE PRESIDENT RESIGN ?

The House members, to their credit, whether partisan or not, have gone on record. We should expect as much from our Senators.

There are three options:

- A. Those in favor of censure and who believe the President should remain in office - Vote NO
- B. Those favoring resignation, but feel the President should remain in office - ABSTAIN
- C. Those in favor of resignation and feel the President should leave office - Vote YES

If the yes votes outnumber the nays, proceed with the trial to completion. If the nays prevail, start the trial and abruptly end it.

Everyone in the country has already decided one way or the other. Stand up and be counted. What could be simpler.

Does anyone believe the President will admit he lied under oath?

Sincerely,

cc: Senator Trent Lott
Senator Patrick Moynihan

o. impeach

IMPEACHMENT

Resignation is Clinton's only chance to show Americans some respect

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EDITORIAL →

IF A SENATOR BELIEVES THE PRESIDENT SHOULD RESIGN, BECAUSE OF HIS BEHAVIOR OVER THE PAST YEAR, HIS ARROGANCE AND REFUSAL TO ADMIT LYING UNDER OATH, HE SHOULD, IN GOOD CONSCIENCE VOTE TO REMOVE FROM OFFICE.

TO FAVOR BOTH RESIGNATION AND REMAINING IN OFFICE IS AN UNTENABLE POSITION.

It is time for Bill Clinton to ponder what prize he will have won if he survives the Senate trial triggered by his impeachment.

Clinton would serve out his term as a man without dignity or shame, whose lack of honor disgraced his office and turned the White House into an empty shell ringing with the echoes of deceit.

Only his resignation can reclaim a shred of stature for the man and the office.

The Senate's responsibility is to proceed with a trial, not to look beyond the Constitution and agree to the plea-bargain Clinton once again begged for yesterday. If the Senate cannot produce an acceptable quick end to this, the president can.

It would be unlike Bill Clinton to resign, of course. He is accustomed to escaping the consequences of his actions by squeezing through loopholes created by tortuous word games. He insists on defining terms when truth carries its own, simple definition.

A presidency must rest on something more substantial than a crumbling pillar of desperate semantics.

Yet, that's what we can expect if Clinton fights for a final, empty victory on the floor of the Senate — the "twisted interpretations that a reasonable person would not draw," as the House Judiciary Committee accurately described them.

We can expect more. If the trial is to have substance, it must get at the heart of the most serious charge against Clinton, that he lied under oath in describing his sexual contact with Monica Lewinsky. Her credibility would have to be tested as well as his. She could well be called as a witness. "Did he touch your breasts or genitalia?" a House manager would ask, and 100 senators and the chief justice of the United States would wait for the answer.

Bill Clinton's resignation can spare us this final indignity.

His presidency is damaged beyond repair, but the presidency itself can be restored to respect. If Clinton can, for once, summon up selflessness, he can give his ideas and his administration a chance to survive in the hands of a new president.

What promises to be a long, bitter trial will suspend any serious consideration of domestic issues and will force the harshest skepticism upon any foreign initiatives a wounded president might offer.

A second presidential resignation would be wrenching for the nation but not a fatal destabilization of government. If anything, it can restore stability. When Richard

Nixon resigned, the government, rooted in the strength of the Constitution, carried on. So did we.

We'll carry on better without the distraction of a president licking his self-inflicted wounds at every turn, trying to convince us daily that he continues to deserve the trust he threw back in our faces.

That, in fact, is the true measure of Bill Clinton's sins that goes beyond all the questions of law and Constitution. The senators will be asked to decide if he committed perjury and obstructed justice. The Senate verdict will hang on that.

A verdict on another charge can be more easily rendered. It can't be put aside by legal smokescreens clouding a question of whether or not a law was broken.

A bond was broken. Clinton looked the American people in the eye, he wagged his finger at them and he lied to them. Use Clinton's preferred term — misled — and the deception is no less.

Why shouldn't Clinton be forgiven after his many apologies? Nobody is without fault, goes the plea. Why expect more of him because he's the president?

It isn't that we are holding a president to a higher standard. He should be held merely to a basic standard of decency everyday people apply to their own lives every day.

Plenty of Americans do a damn good job living their lives honestly and honorably. It's not always easy, but they do it. They take on the responsibilities of family, job and community with allegiance to integrity, accountability and loyalty. If we accept the proposition that we are a nation of liars and cheats and shouldn't expect to be led by anyone different, we demean those people of integrity.

That sentiment could be read into Rep. Bob Livingston's announcement that he was surrendering his leadership of the House and, ultimately, his seat. As Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde said on the floor, there is a difference between the private sin of infidelity and the public transgressions committed by the president. Nevertheless, if it was Livingston's sense of shame that demanded he sacrifice the political prize he had won, it was an act of humility rooted in respect for constituents and colleagues.

Before the Senate takes up the task of passing judgment, Clinton has his own chance to express respect for his fellow citizens. He should surrender to his own folly, for once, by surrendering the office he has disgraced.