

perhaps the rule of law has been diminished; that now it is no longer the case that one will be able to prosecute for perjury or obstruction of justice; that perhaps in a sexual harassment or discrimination case there will be some new precedent established, the "Clinton standard," that you can actually walk very close to the line of telling the whole truth, and if you choose not to do it and you are clever enough about the way you phrase things, maybe you will be able to escape punishment. Perhaps people who were punished for perjury in sexual discrimination cases ought to be no longer punished under those same circumstances.

That is what I am saying is our unfinished business. Every one of us who has something to say about it should say: No, this case does not stand for that. This was the President of the United States whom the Senate chose not to remove from office, the most severe thing that could occur to a President. And there were a lot of reasons for that. Some of our colleagues felt it would simply be too much of a disruption for our country. Some thought that the particular activity in this case was just not quite serious enough to warrant his removal.

Those of us who disagreed with that did so, among other reasons, because we believed that allowing the President to remain in office would subvert the rule of law; that this would be used as an excuse for people to lie in the future; that there would not be as much adherence to the precedents in the past, of ensuring that people who take the law into their own hands are appropriately punished. That is one of the reasons that many of us voted guilty in this case.

But I think even though we did not prevail and the President was not removed, that everyone in the Chamber would agree—all 100 of us would agree—that we do not want this case to stand for the proposition that you can subvert justice by impeding discovery or by lying, by giving false testimony; that you cannot do those things and expect that the rule of law in the future will be any less severe with respect to its consequences.

As I said, this case must be deemed the exception that proves the rule because of its unique circumstances. In every way that those of us who are permitted to do so, we must uphold the rule of law in the country.

Specifically, that means we must teach this to our young people. We must talk about it as lawmakers here, when we speak to the local Lions Club or local Rotary Club, wherever we may be speaking, that lawyers and judges in the country must strictly adhere to the law. Anyone who appears before a court as a litigant must themselves strictly adhere to these principles and never violate the law as it exists. And anyone who teaches with respect to

what this means should take the position that it does not mean that one can take the law into one's own hands and succeed in subverting justice simply because of what did or did not happen to the President of the United States in this particular case.

The rule of law is important to this country because it distinguishes us from almost every other country in the world. There are certainly other countries in which one can expect to get relatively fair justice, but in the United States we consider ourselves unique. We have, for over 210 years, protected the rule of law in this country. We have ensured that even the least among us can get equal justice under law. And this country has done a great deal to ensure that principle is true, whether it is in the Federal courts or the local courts of the country; whether it is with respect to the rich and the powerful and the famous or, as I said, the least among us. In our system, the law applies equally to everyone.

We must ensure that remains the case. How many of us would want to submit our lives or our fortunes to the justice system—oh, let's just take one of the many countries south of us, for example—in the southern hemisphere? Or in Russia today, where one cannot even engage in commerce because there is not a rule of law which ensures that dispute resolution in commercial dealings will be done fairly? How many of us would want to be accused of a crime in one of those societies and have to defend ourselves or be sued in one of those societies and be assured that we would be dealt with in a fair way? In many of those countries today, unless you have the ability to bribe someone or to pay someone off, you cannot be assured of fair justice.

In the United States today, even though we do not want to go to court, every one of us knows that if we have to go to court, we can at least expect that we will be dealt with fairly because truth-telling is at the bottom of the judicial process and truth-telling will be enforced.

It will be maintained because it will be enforced, and we can point to many cases in which people who lied are now serving in jail because of their perjury.

That is why it is important to maintain the rule of law in our country. That is what the rule of law is all about. That is why it is important, and that is why we have to sustain it.

So, Mr. President, as I reflected on what my constituents were asking me, as I talked to them over the course of this last Presidents' Day recess in Arizona, and I thought about the importance of the rule of law in the United States to each one of us, and the questions that had been raised as a result of the fact that the President was not removed from office, I dedicated myself to talking about this, to writing about

it, and to ensuring my constituents back home and, hopefully, people around the country will understand how important it is for all of us over the next weeks, months, and years to ensure that the rule of law is not diminished, is not subverted as a result of the Senate's action with respect to the impeachment of President Clinton.

One could draw that conclusion, but we must not permit that conclusion to be drawn. It is up to us to maintain the rule of law in the United States, and I believe that because of the dedication to the principle of the rule of law and the fact that everyone in this country wishes it to remain strong, and the fact that all 100 of us in this Chamber, I am certain, and the Members in the House of Representatives as well, are dedicated to that proposition and do not want to see the result of this case diminish the rule of law; that all of us will rededicate ourselves to that principle and will do everything we can over the course, as I said, of the ensuing months and years to ensure the rule of law in this country remains strong and we will continue to provide in this country, as we have in the past over 200 years, equal justice for all.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, is recognized.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. Con. Res. 12 are located in today's RECORD under "Submission of concurrent and Senate resolutions.")

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, seeing no one seeking the floor, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

SOLDIERS', SAILORS', AIRMEN'S AND MARINES' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 1999

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now