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USHOR Floor Speech on Liberty, Duty, and the U.S. Constitution

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[AUTHENTICITY CERTIFIED: Text version below transcribed directly from audio]

Tonight, I rise to discuss freedom and our constitutional duty to protect it.

Mr. Speaker:

I have been privileged to see first-hand how powerful and how fragile freedom is. Twenty-eight years ago, I stood outside a polling place, a schoolhouse in western Kenya. Soldiers had chased away people who were lined up to vote. A few hours later, they came streaming back in, risking further attack, undaunted in their determination to exercise their right to vote.

In 1992, I sat across a table from a young mayor in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, and I listened to him talk of his dream of liberating his nation from communism. Years later, for his dedication to the cause of freedom, Boris Nemtsov was assassinated by Vladimir Putin's thugs.



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In Warsaw, in 1990, I listened to a young Polish woman tell me that her greatest fear was that people would forget -- they would forget what it was like to live under Soviet domination, that they would forget the price of freedom.

Three men: an immigrant who escaped Castro's totalitarian regime; a young man who grew up behind the iron curtain and became his country's minister of defense; and a dissident who spent years in the Soviet gulag have all told me it was the miracle of America captured in the words of President Ronald Reagan that inspired them.

And I have seen the power of faith and freedom. I listened to Pope John Paul II speak to thousands in Nairobi in 1985, and 19 years later I watched that same pope take my father's hands, look in his eyes, and say, "God Bless America."

God has blessed America, Mr. Speaker, but our freedom only survives if we protect it; if we honor our oath, taken before God in this chamber, to support and defend the Constitution; if we recognize threats to freedom when they arise.

Today, we face a threat America has never seen before. A former President, who provoked a violent attack on this Capitol in an effort to steal the election, has resumed his aggressive effort to convince Americans that the election was stolen from him. He risks inciting further violence.

Millions of Americans have been misled by the former President. They have heard only his words, but not the truth, as he continues to undermine our democratic process, sowing seeds of doubt about whether democracy really works at all.

I am a conservative Republican and the most conservative of conservative principles is reverence for the rule of law.



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The Electoral College has voted. More than 60 state and federal courts, including multiple judges the former President appointed, have rejected his claims. The Trump Department of Justice investigated the former President's claims of widespread fraud and found no evidence to support them. The election is over. That is the rule of law. That is our constitutional process.

Those who refuse to accept the rulings of our courts are at war with the Constitution. Our duty is clear. Every one of us who has sworn the oath must act to prevent the unraveling of our democracy. This is not about policy. This is not about partisanship. This is about our duty as Americans. Remaining silent, and ignoring the lie, emboldens the liar.

I will not participate in that. I will not sit back and watch in silence while others lead our party down a path that abandons the rule of law and joins the former President's crusade to undermine our democracy.

As the party of Reagan, Republicans have championed democracy, won the Cold War, and defeated the Soviet Communists. Today, America is on the cusp of another Cold War -- this time with communist China. Attacks against our democratic process and the rule of law empower our adversaries and feed Communist propaganda that American democracy is a failure. We must speak the truth. Our election was not stolen, and America has not failed.

I received a message last week from a Gold Star father who said, "Standing up for the truth honors all who gave all." We must all strive to be worthy of the sacrifice of those who have died for our freedom. They are the patriots Katherine Lee Bates described in the words of *America the Beautiful* when she wrote:

*O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife.
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life!*



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Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, this is at the heart of what our oath requires: that we love our country more; that we love her so much that we will stand above politics to defend her; that we will do everything in our power to protect our constitution and our freedom that has been paid for by the blood of so many.

We must love America so much that we will never yield in her defense.

That is our duty.

Thank you.