

Representative Hill Delivers Final Floor Speech

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Representative Hill delivered her final floor speech. Below are the representative's prepared remarks and video of her speech.

"This is the last speech I will give from this floor as a Member of Congress. I wasn't ready for this. It's a reality I am still grappling with, and I will be for a long time to come.

I expected – or at least hoped – to be here as long as the voters of California's 25th District deemed me worthy of the honor of representing them. I thought I could make a difference here, in making my community, our great country, and the world a better place for generations to come.

I, like so many of my colleagues, ran for office because I believed that our political system was broken, controlled by the powerful and the wealthy, ignoring and failing the regular people that it's supposed to serve. I came here to give a voice to the unheard in the halls of power.

I wanted to show young people, queer people, working people, imperfect people – that they belong here – because this is the people's house. I fell short of that. And I'm sorry.

To every young person who saw themselves and their dreams reflected in me, I'm sorry.

To those who felt like I gave them hope in one of the darkest times in our nation's history, I'm sorry.

To my family, my friends, my staff, my colleagues, my mentors – to everyone who has supported and believed in me, I'm sorry.

To the thousands of people who spent hours knocking doors in the hot summer sun, who made countless phone calls, who sacrificed more than I could ever know to give everything they could in every possible way so that I could be here, I am so, so sorry.

And to every little girl who looked up to me – I hope that one day you can forgive me.

The mistakes I made and the people I've hurt that led to this moment will haunt me for the rest of my life. Ever since those images first came out, I've barely left my bed. I've ignored all the calls and texts. I went to the darkest places that a mind can go, and I've shed more tears than I thought were possible. I've hidden from the world, because I am terrified of facing all the people I let down.

But I made it through because the people who love me most dragged me back into the light and reminded me that I was stronger than that. To those of you who were by my side in my worst moments – you know who you are – I love you, I'm so grateful, and I will never forget.

And I am here today because so many of the people I let down – people close to me, supporters, colleagues, people I've never met, told me to stand back up and that, despite all my faults, they still believed in me and they were still counting on me. And I realized that hiding away and disappearing would be the one unforgivable sin. I will never shirk my responsibility for this sudden ending to my time here. But I have to say more, because this is bigger than me.

I am leaving now because of a double standard.

I am leaving because I no longer want to be used as a bargaining chip. I am leaving because I didn't want to be peddled by papers and blogs and websites, used by shameless operatives for the dirtiest gutter politics I've ever seen and the right-wing media to drive clicks and expand their audience by distributing intimate photos of me taken without my knowledge let alone my consent for the sexual entertainment of millions.

I am leaving because of a misogynistic culture that gleefully consumed my naked pictures, capitalized on my sexuality, and enabled my abusive ex to continue that abuse, this time with the entire country watching.

I am leaving because of the thousands of vile, threatening emails, texts and calls that make me fear for my life and the lives of the people I care about.

Today is the first time I've left my apartment since the photos, taken without my consent, were released, and I am scared. I am leaving because for the sake of my community, my staff, my family, and myself, I can't allow this to continue. Because I have been told that people were angry when I stood strong after the first article was posted, and that they had hundreds more photos and text messages that they would release bit by bit until they broke me down to nothing, while they used my faults and my past to distract from the things that matter most.

I am leaving because there is only one investigation that deserves the attention of this country – and that's the one we voted on today.

Today, I ask you all to stand with me and commit to creating a future where this no longer happens to women and girls. Yes, I am stepping down, but I refuse to let this experience scare off other women who dare to take risks, who dare to step into this light, who dare to be powerful.

It might feel like they won in the short term, but they can't in the long term. We can't let them. And the way to overcome this set back is for women to keep showing up, to keep running for office, to keep stepping up as leaders. Because the more we show up, the less power they have. I am leaving, but we have men who have been credibly accused of intentional acts of sexual violence and remain in board rooms, on the Supreme Court, in this very body, and worst of all, in the Oval Office.

So, the fight goes on – to create the change that every woman and girl in this country deserves. Here, in the halls of Congress, the fight will go on without me – and I trust so many of my colleagues to be strong on this front while I move onto one of the many other battlefields. Because we have an entire culture that has to change, and we see it in stark clarity today:

The forces of revenge by a bitter, jealous man, cyber exploitation and sexual shaming that target our gender, and a large segment of society that fears and hates powerful women have combined to push a young woman out of power and say she doesn't belong here.

Yet a man who brags about his sexual predation, who has had dozens of women come forward to accuse him of sexual assault, who pushes policies that are uniquely harmful to women, and who has filled the courts with judges who proudly rule to deprive women of the most fundamental right to control their own bodies – sits in the highest office in the land.

And so today, as my last vote, I voted on impeachment proceedings, not just because of corruption, obstruction of justice, or gross misconduct, but because of the deepest abuse of power – including the abuse of power over women.

Today, as my final act, I voted to move forward with the impeachment of Donald Trump on behalf of the women of the United States of America.

We will not stand down.

We will not be broken.

We will not be silenced.

We will rise, and we will make tomorrow better than today.

Thank you, and I yield the balance of my time for now, but not forever.”