

Mr. Speaker:

Our country is facing a perilous moment. In my District, parents are reassuring frightened children that everything will be alright. That's what parents do. Our job as Members of Congress is to do the best we can to make sure those reassurances come true.

I was born and raised in Chicago. In 2000, I voted for the very first time in my life. I voted for Barack Obama to serve in this chamber. While he did not win that election, I was inspired by his message of reform, change, and hope.

Throughout his life and career, Barack Obama has always tried to bring different people together. Even in a highly polarized and tumultuous time, he has always tried to rise above and bridge those divisions and to be a unifying force for good. This is who Barack Obama is. This is who he was at Harvard Law School. This is who he was as a community organizer in Chicago. This is who he was as a state senator, as the congressional candidate that I voted for, as a United States Senator, and as our President.

Right now, President Obama is engaged in the duty of discharging his constitutional and moral obligation to orchestrate an orderly transition of power to a new president. And I understand and respect why under the circumstances he has chosen to emphasize a message of national unity. And I understand and respect why Hillary Clinton who — despite the painful knowledge that she received more votes than her opponent — is doing the same.

But I feel that I have a different obligation at this moment, as do my colleagues in this House. I have a duty to tell the truth about Donald Trump. We cannot treat him like any other politician, or even like any other Republican, because he is not. He represents something much more dangerous. And while none of us want this to be the case, we have a duty to treat him like the threat he is — a threat to our values, a threat to our people, and a threat to our national identity.

Donald Trump brings a lifetime of professional, political, and personal experience to his new office. He is seventy years old, and it's unrealistic to expect him to change at this moment in time.

Donald Trump is a sexual predator who brags about grabbing women without their consent. To date, he has been accused of sexual assault by nearly a dozen women.

Donald Trump is a demagogue. His political mentor was Roy Cohn Senator Joseph McCarthy's right hand man. No surprise that Donald Trump burst onto the national conservative scene by peddling a racist birther conspiracy, questioning whether Barack Obama was even American.

Donald Trump is a bigot. Even Paul Ryan — the leader of this great House — called Donald Trump's words attacking a federal judge of Mexican descent "the textbook definition of racism."

Donald Trump is a liar. Senator Ted Cruz called him a "pathological liar" who is "completely amoral" to boot.

But most of all, Donald Trump is a con-artist, as Senator Marco Rubio said months ago.

Next month, Donald Trump is going on trial for fraud related to the fake university that bore his name. A series of exposés in the Washington Post have revealed systematic misuse of funds at the fake charity he established. In Atlantic City he enriched himself at the expense of creditors, investors, workers, and suppliers while running multiple casinos into bankruptcy. Every one of us in this Congress – every single one of us – know who Donald Trump is. It does not matter what he says today or what he does tomorrow. His whole life and his whole campaign speak to who he is and what kind of President he will be for our country.

We should be horrified because it is horrifying. The man who boasted that “I alone will fix it” will fix nothing. He has broken us apart. Millions of Americans are living in fear because he has threatened them. Muslims, Latinos, African-Americans, women, the disabled, the LGBT community, and more.

Donald Trump will be our next President. We here in Congress must oppose his agenda. We must oppose his efforts to build up his power. Anything that makes Trump more powerful, makes him more dangerous.

Look at who Donald Trump is. Look at the life he has led. Look at the campaign he ran. No one should be under any delusion.

Never more in my lifetime have we needed strong, aggressive, innovative, strategic leadership from the Democratic Party and the progressive movement that fuels it. Donald Trump will be no ordinary President. Rather than helping him protect the country, we must protect the country from the new President. This is uncharted territory.

In the days since his election, Trump has attacked the right to protest. He has attacked the New York Times for publishing critical coverage. He announced that Steve Bannon, a white nationalist, will serve as his chief strategist and senior counselor in the White House. He has committed to deporting 2-3 million immigrants immediately. His team has threatened legal action against a senator who criticized him.

On the campaign trail, he threatened to use the regulatory powers of the federal government to retaliate against critics.

Despite his promise to “drain the swamp” of corruption in Washington, he is stacking his transition team with corporate lobbyists and preparing to install foxes to watch the people’s henhouse.

Last, but by no means least, he has refused to engage in any meaningful financial disclosure, or to take any steps whatsoever to mitigate the conflicts of interest inherent in the President of the United States also being the head of a massive, opaque network of privately held companies. We don’t know who he owes money to, we don’t know who is paying him, and we don’t even know what he knows. He’s installed his children and heirs to manage his company even while they serve as top advisors to his transition.

Given everything we know about Donald Trump — and everything we don't know — I was alarmed by the words of senior leaders from both the progressive and centrist wings of the party regarding their openness to working with Donald Trump on infrastructure.

Under ordinary circumstances, we would welcome a plan to invest in infrastructure -- even if that plan came from the other side of the aisle. Especially if it came from the other side of the aisle!

But Donald Trump is not an ordinary politician. He is a con-artist. He has refused to give the American people reason to believe that he is not in this to enrich himself. In fact, he has bucked tradition by maintaining his family's interest in a private corporation.

And, unfortunately, his infrastructure plan is really a privatization scheme, rife with graft and corruption, whose real purpose is to enrich the Trump family and his supporters. He is not reaching out. He is reaching his hand into America's pockets, just as he has his whole career. And we must not let him do it.

When President Obama took office, even Americans who didn't support him celebrated what his election said about our country and united in wishing him well. Here in Congress, however, Republicans announced they would not lift a finger to help him lead our country.

As Donald Trump takes office, even Americans who did reluctantly cast their votes for him worry about what his election says about our country. And if we are united, it is our fervent hope that he does not govern the way he has campaigned.

Here in Congress, however, we cannot afford to give him the benefit of the doubt. We must not lift a finger to help him scam our country. We must instead put every effort into stopping him.

Thank you.