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WHEN CREDIBILITY MATTERS

Stefanik spat with Schiff spurs controversy

Cobb campaign raises \$650k

By Jason Subik | [November 16, 2019](#)



Elise Stefanik

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Surges in internet traffic are sometimes called “breaking the internet,” and U.S. Rep. Elise Stefanik’s attempt to break impeachment hearing committee rules Friday has done just that — and led to record-breaking campaign surges for her 2020 Democratic opponent.

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Saturday evening #trashystefanik was ranked 22 among trending hashtags on twitter.com, a reference to Conservative attorney George Conway’s tweet urging people to donate to Republican Stefanik’s opponent. Conway is married to President Donald Trump’s 2016 campaign manager Kellyann Conway, and was one of the lawyers who represented Paula Jones in the civil lawsuit that ultimately led to the impeachment of President Bill Clinton.

“@EliseStefanik is lying trash. Please give to her opponent, @TedraCobb,” tweeted Conway Saturday.

People responded, donating \$650,000 in less than 24 hours since the incident Friday to Democrat Tedra Cobb, who Stefanik defeated by 14 percentage points in 2018.

Conway himself gave \$2,800. Cobb campaign staff said the donations effectively doubled the campaign’s war chest since they started raising money in April.

Stefanik responded to Conway, via twitter: “And for you @gtconway3d — the

x d in my life is TRASH. You need serious help. I don’t have your sick misogynist (sic) support.”

Conway’s criticism of Stefanik occurred on Friday when he crossed rhetorical swords with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Adam Schiff, D-Calif, during an

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House should vote on articles of impeachment for President Donald Trump. House approval of any of the articles would result in a trial of Trump in the U.S. Senate. The Senate could find Trump guilty and strip him of his presidency — a most unlikely prospect, as Trump maintains solid support among majority Senate Republicans.

During the hearing Friday, ranking committee Republican U.S. Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif, attempted to yield some of his minutes of questioning time of former ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch's to Stefanik, a practice allowed during typical committee hearings, but not allowed during the impeachment inquiry.

Rules for the impeachment hearing allow the committee chairman and ranking member to only cede minutes to committee staff counsel.

When Stefanik attempted to speak, Schiff used his gavel to silence her. "The gentlewoman will suspend," Schiff said. "You are not recognized."

"What is the interruption for this time?" she said. "This is the fifth time you have interrupted members of Congress, duly elected members of Congress.

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release statistics on her fundraising since the multiple social media posts asking supporters to

t of both Stefanik and President Trump. er staff members of the House Intelligence the whistleblower whose report ignited the

impeachment process in Washington. Trump administration officials, in an

whistleblower's report from being disclosed through the normal process. Schiff's knowledge of its existence allowed him to push for its release.

"How many times can Adam Schiff say 'the Gentlewoman is NOT recognized?," Stefanik posted on Saturday. "He clearly has NO interest in letting Republicans have any say in the impeachment hearings."

George Conway has characterized Stefanik's statements as political "gaslighting" and has pointed out Stefanik spoke for nine minutes and 50 seconds during the hearing, the second most of any Republican behind 12 minutes and 33 seconds for Nunes.

Critics of Stefanik have argued the event was a stunt designed to underscore Republican objections to a process controlled by Democrats. The Daily Gazette submitted questions to Stefanik, one asking her if she was aware of the rule prohibiting Nunes from yielding time to her. The question was not answered by press time Saturday.



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The rules were communicated to every member of Congress after they were approved by a party-line vote of the House last month.

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change has received passionate responses
 nik's actions.
 Springs Republican Committee chairman,
 Saturday.
 drawing so much criticism shows they're
 posing the truth," Lewis tweeted.

Cobb responded via email to the controversy.

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skipped several important private hearings — but with the cameras on, she repeatedly attempted to derail public hearings. Instead of performing cheap political stunts, she should focus on doing her job,” Cobb stated. “This week’s hearings highlighted grave allegations concerning this administration’s interaction with Ukraine. This is a matter of national security that must be fully investigated. Ambassador Yovanovitch is a public servant who deserves to testify without being attacked. Far too often the tenor of our politics divides us.”

During her allotted five minutes of question time, Stefanik thanked Yovanovitch but did not ask questions of her. Instead she read headlines from articles indicating Schiff’s past stance that he would like the whistleblower to testify in front of the committee.

Stefanik and other Republicans have complained since the impeachment process began that they can not issue witness subpoenas without majority approval from a House committee or question subpoenas issued by the majority in open session. These rules were put in by the Republican majority in 2015 and supported by Stefanik.

Some Democrats see gender as playing a role in Stefanik’s newly prominent role on the Intelligence Committee — stage management by a largely male corps of Republican lawmakers. Stefanik is the only GOP woman on the panel and, at 35, the youngest of the 13 Republican women in the House.

“I think everything they did today [Friday] was strategy,” said Rep. Val Demings, D-Fla., one of three Democratic women on the committee. “She’s one of the newer members on the committee, and she’s a woman. ... When they are badgering a female witness who is a career Foreign Service officer with an impeccable record, and they want to badger her, I think it’s a better look when a woman is taking the lead on that.”

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Stefanik has not shied away from her party’s fraught record on gender, delivering stern warnings to the men running her party that the GOP needs to do a better job recruiting female candidates and appealing to female voters. To that end, she has raised more than \$340,000 this year for her political action committee devoted to electing GOP women — an effort that has the backing of House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., and other top party officials

She bristled at the suggestion that her role in this week’s hearings had anything to do with gender: “They’re putting me forward because I ask the best questions,” Stefanik said, calling any suggestion otherwise “shameful.”

According to transcripts released by the Intelligence Committee, Stefanik attended at least part of seven of the 11 depositions for which the panel has issued transcripts. Stefanik asked questions in two of those seven depositions.

That is an above-average attendance rate among the members of the three committees authorized to participate, but Stefanik is not among the handful of Republicans who have attended every session and asked frequent questions.

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x with two State Department officials, Stefanik
er Democrats would be “prohibiting witnesses
stions as you have in the closed-door

woman should know, if she was present for

She interjected: “Which I was.”

Stefanik has otherwise used her time in both public hearings to deliver key GOP messages: Trump’s policy of delivering aid for lethal weapons was better for Ukraine than former President Barack Obama’s; that Trump was justified in seeking investigations of Ukrainian corruption; and that Ukraine ultimately got military aid.



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But as she was emerging as a GOP star on Friday, during a recess in the hearing Stefanik was one of only 13 Republicans who joined with 222 Democrats to reauthorize the U.S. Export-Import Bank — a long-standing target of House conservatives..

She also remains a favorite daughter of the GOP’s establishment wing, a group that has long managed to swallow its discomfort with Trump. Stefanik was named this month to Time magazine’s list of the 100 most influential up-and-coming global leaders. In a short essay for the list, former House speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., called Stefanik “the future of hopeful, aspirational politics in America.”

Stefanik has also broken with Trump on some major issues. She was one of x e against the Republicans sweeping 2017 tax Americans and support an effort to grant legal l immigrants.

woman” event in Johnstown in October, mp’s tariffs, which she said are a tax paid by farmers. She also opposed cuts to the cy. She said was among the first Republicans

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resign and she condemned Trump's betrayal of the Kurds in Syria.

"This is one where I vehemently disagreed with [President Trump]. I was one of the first voices to say 'This is unacceptable,' not just because of this particular incident, because very tragically lives will be lost, but for what this means for the future when our partners and allies don't think they can rely on us," she said.

Stefanik said she believes soliciting help from a foreign country in a U.S. election is illegal; she believes the 2016 election was tampered with by the Russians; and she supports increased funding to protect U.S. elections.

But she has not called for any kind of punishment for Trump for his phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, the basis for the House impeachment hearings. Stefanik has repeatedly said she does not support impeaching Trump, and neither do the majority of the people in her district, which voted by a 14 percentage point margin to support Trump in 2016.

Washington Post reporter Mike DeBonis contributed to this article.



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