



SENATOR JOSÉ MENÉNDEZ DISTRICT 26

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Contact: Cynthia Cabral, Communications Director

cell: 210-639-8686 | **office:** 210-733-6604 | Cynthia.Cabral@senate.texas.gov

Senator José Menéndez Issues Statement on Court of Impeachment

The Texas Constitution allows the House of Representatives to begin and refer articles of impeachment and requires the Texas Senate to impartially try the articles presented before the body. Over the last couple of months, the Texas Senate has prepared to fulfill its duty. As the State Senator for Senate District 26, it was my duty to impartially review the evidence, listen to the arguments presented, and vote to ensure the protection of the public, the preservation of the integrity of a state government, and the foundation of our democracy.

As a member of the Senate, in the Senate Court of Impeachment, the Constitution grants us the heavy duty of ensuring that we impartially review all of the evidence before us. When holding office as an elected official or staff member of an elected official, we must ensure the trust, integrity, and well-being of the public is always placed first. The courage and bravery of the whistleblowers is what we should hope for those who serve the public. While I do not agree with every viewpoint of the whistleblowers, they put the State of Texas first in making a good-faith report to the proper authorities. When one earns the duty of a public servant, we should hope and expect that they hold the values of and service to people, over party and power. Each elected office does not belong to the office holder, it belongs to the people. We are temporary placeholders of office. The decisions we make during our tenure, and especially during this historic Court of Impeachment, will direct the trajectory of our government, democracy, and how it serves the people.

During the Impeachment Trial of Attorney General Warren Kenneth Paxton, Jr., twenty Articles of Impeachment were brought before the Texas Senate and sixteen were tried. The House Board of Managers provided over 3,000 pages of documents and 7 days' worth of testimony. Moreover, each of the whistleblowers testified providing critical evidence to support these articles. It was shocking to me that several public servants, including a decorated Texas Ranger, were mocked throughout the trial.

It is important to note that the Court of Impeachment is not a civil or criminal court. It is not the House's responsibility to give the Senate every single piece of evidence. Rather, the House must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the Attorney General violated his oath of office, and committed acts outlined in each respective article of impeachment. After a thorough review, I voted to sustain articles of impeachment, as the House Board of Managers met the high burden of proof, beyond a reasonable doubt.

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I am incredibly disappointed with the outcome of this trial. Before and during the trial, external forces applied pressure to prevent jurors from voting impartially. After an intense review of the evidence, I believe an acquittal of every article of impeachment condones the morally bankrupt actions of Warren Kenneth Paxton, Jr. Moreover, it sends a message to future whistleblowers that their bravery may not produce justice. The final chapter of this decision is not written, and it is my belief that this outcome will be known as a profound error.

The confidence in our government institutions is derived from a system of checks and balances necessary to ensure that those in positions of authority serve the best interests of the people. In the future, it is my hope and prayer that we do not find ourselves in a similar circumstance, but if you do, I implore you to put the people of Texas first, as that will be the only way we can ensure that the government serves the people and democracy.

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