

Madison Cawthorn
11th District of North Carolina



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

August 26, 2021

The Honorable Kamala Harris
Vice President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Madame Vice President

I write to you today on a subject of great importance and great sensitivity. Our nation is at a crisis point. Rising Sino imperialism and colonialism, revanchist Russian ambitions, illegal immigrants pouring across an undefended border, rising inflation, a diminished America on the world stage, and the prospect of American honor being lost in a craven retreat from the Taliban in Afghanistan; all are issues demanding our attention. These times of crisis require intelligence, competence, hardiness, and firm hands at the tiller of the ship of state. The job, “Leader of the Free World”, is not a position granted from sympathy, whimsy, or genetic caste, it is a job for which sober-minded citizens select from amongst themselves an individual that is best-suited to defend them from enemies foreign or domestic. The job, President of these United States is a sacred trust granted to very few in the hopes that they will protect the legacy of this country and the lives of those who inhabit it.

Madam Vice President, you are a heartbeat away from the Presidency and the position you inhabit is substantially different than it was even 50 years ago. No longer must you content yourself merely with the portions of the job the President is not interested in. Vice Presidents now work hand in hand with the President on foreign policy, national defense and domestic issues. You are truly the second most powerful person in the world. You know, from the debate stage to the campaign trail (such as it was), numerous cabinet meetings and affairs of state, the extent of President Biden’s powers and his current cognitive limitations. As the person that works closest with the President, you are also the one who best knows the differences between the perception the West Wing wants to project and the ugly reality.

It brings me no pleasure to report this, but I have become increasingly convinced of what you already know, President Biden is no longer capable of discharging the duties of his office. The crises that I mentioned above requires a President that is operating at the peak of his cognitive powers. It seems obvious now that this is no longer the case, President Biden is not the Joseph R. Biden of even two years ago. If we, those kindly disposed to our country and its defenders take notice, what will our adversaries and rivals say? Surely, they are awaiting opportunities to exploit this executive-level vulnerability both interpersonally and in their propaganda. America, the best hope of the world, cannot afford a weakness so obvious and glaring. To ask Americans to refuse the obvious evidence of their eyes is a mistake.

Americans cannot be expected to deceive themselves and we should not expect you to deceive us. Every hour, every minute, every second that the truth is hidden increases the costs of Americans finding out that the Executive Branch is led by a declining mind. Every day that passes witnesses another entry in the

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ledger of decline. In my letters to Cabinet members, Senate President Pro Tempore Leahy and Speaker Pelosi, I listed evidence of decline. With you, such evidence would be insulting.

What then must be done? The Constitution provides us a remedy – Section 4 of the 25th Amendment lays out the process by which the sitting President may be removed from office for inability to “discharge the powers and duties of his office.” According to this section, “the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the Executive Departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide” may with a written declaration inform the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives that the President is unfit, and upon receipt of that declaration the Vice President will then take the reins of office. It is this grim remedy that I strongly urge you to avail yourself of.

I remind you, Madam Vice President, of the costliness of obfuscation and direct lies to the American people. Hiding from concerned citizens the vast apparatus required to provide an increasingly flimsy illusion of competence is a recipe for irreversibly destroying confidence in our government. American citizens deserve the truth from their government and competence from their leaders. You must speak the truth and bear witness to what you have surely seen with your own eyes.

I recognize the enormity of this request, yet that enormity is dwarfed by the scale of the consequences that face our country should this constitutional remedy be discarded on the grounds of political expediency. America is of more value than any personality, any individual legacy or place in history, any partisan advantage, or political career. Those of us engaged in affairs of state would do well to remember that. For the protection of our citizens, the preservation of our good name abroad, and the furtherance of this great experiment in liberty and democracy, I bid you find your courage and do nothing more and nothing less than your duty.

“Now, men,” said he, “do you hear me?” There was no answer from the fore-castle. “It’s to you, Abraham Gray — it’s to you I am speaking.” Still no reply. “Gray,” resumed Mr. Smollett, a little louder, “I am leaving this ship, and I order you to follow your captain. I know you are a good man at bottom, and I dare say not one of the lot of you’s as bad as he makes out. I have my watch here in my hand; I give you thirty seconds to join me in.” There was a pause. “Come, my fine fellow,” continued the captain; “don’t hang so long in stays. I’m risking my life and the lives of these good gentlemen every second.” There was a sudden scuffle, a sound of blows, and out burst Abraham Gray with a knife cut on the side of the cheek, and came running to the captain like a dog to the whistle. “I’m with you, sir,” said he.” Those words from Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* are eternal, weighty and wise – they tell us that even at the last extremity our better angels can triumph against all odds. History offers that same redemption to you Madam Vice President.

Madam Vice President, you may be the first to see the truth and the last to act but the act itself -as long as it is noble- would be to your credit and a service to our country.

Sincerely,



Madison Cawthorn
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
The Honorable Antony Blinken
The Honorable Janet Yellen

Madison Cawthorn
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The Honorable Lloyd Austin
The Honorable Merrick Garland
The Honorable Deb Haaland
The Honorable Gina Raimondo
The Honorable Marty Walsh
The Honorable Xavier Becerra
The Honorable Marcia Fudge
The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
The Honorable Miguel Cardona
The Honorable Denis McDonough
The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas