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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Toward Impeachment

We are writing as the national coordinators of the National Campaign to Impeach Nixon. We would like to respond to some of the antiimpeachment arguments carried in *The Post* in Nichols Von Hoffman's column of Dec. 26, 1973.

Mr. Von Hoffman suggested that the President, a "contemptible scoundrel," is being punished by remaining in the White House. Living in far greater luxury than the majority of the American people, at their expense, is hardly our idea of "punishment." Mr. Nixon flies from one luxurious estate to another at taxpayers' expense, yet pays no state taxes.

He claimed that impeachment would leave us with "the first President in our history elected by nobody." Yet, the election which brought Nixon to office was fraught with corruption, from Watergate break-ins to blackmail financing.

He argued that Gerald Ford, who represents "the same interests Richard Nixon does," would have more power than a Watergate-weakened Nixon now does. He even made the sexist comment that Nixon's "presence in the White House is a spur to Congress to find its manhood."

We believe that the key to "those same interests" being strongly opposed, the key to a Congress becoming responsible, is a movement of citizens in the cities and towns of this country. This movement sees the protection of our constitutional rights as the most important priority. Congress was forced to move on impeachment because of the massive outpouring of protest after Mr. Nixon fired Special

Prosecutor Cox. Mr. Nixon's eventual release of some tapes, with the absence of two key ones and the inexplicable 18 minutes missing from another have done nothing to restore public confidence, so the citizens of this country must continue to demand congressional action on impeachment.

We believe that to allow Richard Nixon's abuses of power to go unprosecuted would set an ominous precedent for future Presidents. We do not relish the prospect of a Gerald Ford in office. But in the process of impeaching Richard Nixon certain gross abuses of power would have to be pinpointed for the gross and unconstitutional abuses of power that they are, thus making the same thing more difficult in the future. And if, in the process of impeachment, a movement is built which refuses to accept imperial rulers or undemocratic regimes, "those same interests" which Ford represents will find it more difficult to get their way.

The National Campaign to Impeach Nixon is moving ahead with an ambitious program of activities to last through the spring of 1974. Our goal is not to attain office for any individual or keep any individual in power but rather to ensure every American's democratic rights. We cannot place our faith in a weakened but still-in-power Nixon or a temporarily revitalized but still essentially spineless Congress. Our faith can only be in ourselves. The people of America have made impeachment a possibility and only the continued pressure of the people can make it happen.

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