

Idaho Statesman

Idaho Congressman Russ Fulcher helps disrupt House impeachment testimony

BY CYNTHIA SEWELL | OCTOBER 23, 2019



Rep. Russ Fulcher joined about two dozen Republican colleagues to storm inside a secure hearing room where a closed-door deposition with a Defense Department official was taking place as part of the House impeachment inquiry into President Trump. BY STEVE SCALISE

U.S. Idaho Rep. Russ Fulcher joined about two dozen Republican colleagues on Wednesday to storm inside a secure hearing room where a closed-door deposition with a Defense Department official was taking place as part of the House impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump.

Fulcher told the Statesman he is not protesting the hearings, he is “protesting the secrecy of the hearings.”

“We are going to be asked to vote on impeachment,” he said. “I think at a minimum we need to be able see and have access to the testimony and information that leads up to it. Right now that is simply not happening. There is no mechanism to get access to information before we are supposed to vote. That is my biggest concern.”

Fulcher and the others in the group went inside the hearing room, which is a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility, or SCIF — a secure room where members can hear classified information.

When Fulcher and his colleagues entered the room, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Chairman Adam Schiff “ordered the witness to cease their testimony, paused the hearing, and threatened to file ethics charges against the visiting Republican members,” Alexah Rogge, Fulcher’s communication director, told the Statesman.

Democrats said the move compromised national security as some of them brought electronic devices into the secure room, which is prohibited, according to an [Associated Press report](#).

Fulcher did not have his phone with him when he entered the room, Rogge told the Statesman.

Florida Congressman Matt Gaetz, R-Florida, organized and led the all-GOP delegation to “demand increased transparency and inclusion in the impeachment process from House Democrats, specifically Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Chairman Adam Schiff,” he stated in a [news release announcing the event](#).

Typically, depositions are conducted behind closed-doors.

Last week, Schiff sent a letter to House colleagues stating he would eventually make the testimony transcripts available.

“As the investigation proceeds, and at a time that it will not jeopardize investigative equities, we will make the interview transcripts public, subject to any necessary redactions for classified or sensitive information,” Schiff stated, [according to a report from The Hill](#).

Many House Republicans don’t think they should have to wait.

“As Democrats in the House push toward a vote on impeachment, they are simultaneously keeping vital information secret from the very members, including Congressman Fulcher, who will be expected to take this vote,” Rogge said.

Fulcher, who represents Idaho’s 1st Congressional District, is one of more than 150 House Republicans sponsoring [House Resolution 604](#), which calls for the condemnation and censure of Schiff due to his characterization of Trump’s phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

“Rep. Fulcher joined this resolution because he agrees with the concerns listed: Chairman Schiff reading a false retelling of the President’s phone call while in a formal committee hearing, misleading the American people, failure to act professionally in his committee, and more,” [Rogge told the Statesman on Oct. 9](#).

Idaho U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson, R-D2, signed onto the resolution on Oct. 22.

The House on Monday blocked a vote on the resolution in a 218-185 vote.