



## Rep. Tom Emmer on NBC NEWS NOW

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**HOST:**

Joining me now on set here is someone who was up at the podium with Speaker Johnson this morning, Minnesota Republican Congressman and House Majority Whip Tom Emmer. Congressman, we appreciate you making some time and coming in today to talk about this. I do want to start with some of the reaction from your Republican colleagues over this story that's in The Atlantic this week. Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski says there has to be accountability. New York Congressman Mike Lawler says safeguards must be put in place to ensure this never happens again. So accountability and safeguards. Do you agree with that?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

Well, listen, the White House has acknowledged this was a mistake and they're doing an investigation now to make sure it never happens again. So yes.

**HOST:**

What's your perspective on this? The president said, obviously, that he still has confidence in Mike Walsh and he believes that a lesson was learned here in his case. Do you feel that the National Security Advisor and the Secretary of Defense made any mistakes here?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

Well, obviously, they've acknowledged that they made a mistake and that's what they're investigating and they'll get to the bottom of it and they'll make sure that it never happens again. I mean, keep in mind, Signal was approved for use in these circumstances by the previous administration. So whether we agree with it or not, I would imagine the White House is revisiting that issue as well.

**HOST:**

So as you watch this unfold, then you don't have any concerns?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

Look, my concern would be if we're not addressing it. They've been in front of a committee in the Intelligence Committee in the Senate answering questions. The White House has acknowledged it's a mistake, which is the first step, and they're doing the investigation to make sure that they know exactly what happened and to make sure it never happens again.

**HOST:**

And what would that look like to you, correcting what happened here in this in this case? What would that correction look like?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**



Well, I think it's a little earlier and to be talking about what it looks like when you don't even know all the details yet. Obviously, you know, the salacious stuff that has come out. But let's get the rest of the investigation and then let's see what the suggestions are as to how you just make sure this never happens again. Maybe you have to undo the Biden administration's approval of Signal being used. I don't know. Well, let's see what the White House tells us.

**HOST:**

We do know that typically government people who are sharing government information, sensitive information, not even necessarily top secret or classified information, but sensitive information oftentimes there are prescribed channels for exchanging that sensitive information for members of Congress, for members, for folks who are working in the White House. Is that something you feel as though needs to be redoubled, the effort to make sure that those sorts of conversations are only happening in the spaces, physical spaces where they should be happening or with the devices and tools that that are set specifically for sensitive or classified or confidential or top secret information to be exchanged?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

Well, in this case, the CIA directors already confirmed that no classified information was shared. But again, whether this protocol is appropriate or not, it was approved by the Biden administration as a protocol that could be used. Maybe we have to revisit that. I'm going to wait and see what the White House concludes after the investigation is complete. And then we can figure out how whether or not they're taking the right steps to make sure it never happens again.

**HOST:**

We also heard Senator Wicker say that the Armed Services Committee is going to be looking into this as well, holding their own inquiry into what happened here. Do you feel House committees should be investigating this incident as well?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

I'm sure that some will. I bet they're going to be in front of the Intelligence Committee in the House soon as well. So no doubt the House will be involved.

**HOST:**

And if this were Jake Sullivan or Lloyd Austin having a similar situation unfold, would you feel differently about an investigation or more passionate about an investigation?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

You are apparently jumping to conclusions that I'm not passionate about it. I am. I think it doesn't matter what administration is in office. It doesn't matter who we're talking about. The White House has acknowledged that there was a mistake made. There was no classified information shared, which is very important. And they're doing the investigation. Let's find out what the investigation shows, and then let's make sure it never happens again.

**HOST:**

And at this point, you feel confident, satisfied that no classified information was a part of the conversation?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**



Based on what I understand from the administration right now, that is the word, that no classified information was shared. And again, Aaron, I think you've got to go back, and maybe signals should not have been approved in the first place. Maybe regardless of whether it's the previous administration or this one, maybe you have to revisit that.

**AARON:**

I want to ask you about some other business that's on the Hill right now. President Trump is calling on a U.S. district judge here, the chief judge in the D.C. district, Judge Boasberg, who ruled against the government in his Alien Enemies Act case, called for him to be impeached. Are House Republican leaders a no on that idea, the idea of impeachment for this particular judge?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

Well, it's interesting. The judge issued a decision, didn't say the Alien Enemies Act was inappropriately used. And I don't think people in the public understand that. Just said that procedurally, some things may not have been followed. That was the basis for it, as I understand it. It's following the normal process right now. It's literally going, it was argued, I think, today in the district court, or the court of the appellate court.

**AARON:**

Yes.

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

So we'll find out what that result is within the next week or so, and go from there. As far as what's going on in the House, first, impeachment, you're never going to get impeachment, even if it were valid, because you've got to have the votes in the Senate. You don't have them. In the House, I think it's pretty clear that Jim Jordan, who's a chair of our Judiciary Committees, going to conduct an investigation into this. And quite frankly, this is what the public has been concerned about. When Chuck Schumer goes on another program last Sunday and says, don't worry, we spent the last four years appointing and confirming progressive judges that are going to rule against everything that Donald Trump does. That's less than responsible. Judges should only be applying the law to the facts as they are presented, and then making their decisions that way. I think we need to do the investigation that Jim Jordan is going to follow through on to make sure there isn't a problem, because judges should not be making decisions based on their politics. Justice in this country, Aaron, is supposed to be blind.

**AARON:**

The question still stands, though, I think, because we have heard the president very directly, very plainly say, impeach, even though, if I'm hearing you correctly, you're suggesting that the process should play out, that there should be appeals, and it should go through the entirety of that process, as opposed to turning to impeachment as a first lever to pull if a judge makes a ruling or issues a restraining order that perhaps the administration doesn't like. Am I hearing you correctly, that process should come before the idea of impeachment is really embraced?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

No, I think it was pretty clear. I started by telling you, you need seven votes in the Senate that you're not going to get, even if it was, even if there was a basis for impeachment. So I think it's more important that we do the investigation. Emotions are high in this country. Let's do the investigation through the committee work, and let's make sure that what Chuck Schumer claims is not real. Let's not have judges making decisions just because it's



Donald Trump. Let's make sure they're making decisions based on the law and the facts that are presented to them.

**AARON:**

Is there any value in Washington, on the Hill, at the White House, and every place in between, is there any value in even having the conversation, even bringing up the idea of impeachment on an issue like this or similar judgments that may come down from different courts?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

Look, it doesn't matter what your politics are. In this country for years now, there has been a feeling on both ends of the political spectrum that judges have been going beyond the judicial mandate, enacting more pseudo legislators. You know, maybe it's a good time to make sure that's not happening, because I think the American public needs to have confidence in the system.

**AARON:**

I want to ask you too, Speaker Johnson and the Senate Majority Leader Thune are meeting with the Trump administration to talk about the reconciliation package. Just how far apart are the House and Senate on this particular issue at this point?

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

The House has a bill that would involve 11 committees and savings and cuts of \$1.5 trillion. The Senate has one that has, I think it's two committees basically of jurisdiction, and it's got \$4 billion in savings total. So there is a gap between the two, and I think this meeting, it's been happening before today, but today is an important meeting to try and see where that sweet spot is. Our speaker has a very aggressive plan. He wants to be voting on a joint resolution which requires agreement between both the Senate and the House the first week of April before Congress leaves for the April recess.

**AARON:**

All right. We'll have to leave it there. So the clock never works in our favor to keep going with these. We do appreciate you, sir, making some time today and coming in to answer our questions here.

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

Thank you.

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For questions or corrections: mn06watch@gmail.com