

Democratic Congressman Eric Swalwell resigns amid #MeToo-style sex scandal

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On Tuesday, April 14, Eric Swalwell, a seven-term congressman from California's Bay Area, resigned his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. With remarkable speed, Swalwell went from front-runner in the race to become the next governor of America's most populous state to political pariah, denounced by Democrats and Republicans alike.

On Friday, April 10, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and CNN ran lurid accounts by four women accusing Swalwell of sexual abuse. One of the four, a former staffer who has not been identified, claimed that Swalwell raped her on two occasions when she was intoxicated, once in 2019 and again in 2024. The other three accused the then-congressman of sending them sexually explicit and salacious social media posts.

Within hours of the appearance of these reports, which Swalwell claimed were fabrications, his campaign managers and Democratic and trade union endorsers abandoned him and called on him to end his gubernatorial campaign. These included leading Democratic figures, such as House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senator Adam Schiff.

Two days later, on Sunday, April 12, Swalwell announced the suspension of his campaign for governor. While calling the specific allegations against him false, he apologized to his family and acknowledged "mistakes in judgment," evidently acknowledging that he had had extra-marital affairs.

By then 50 former staffers had issued a public letter calling on him to resign from Congress, and numerous lawmakers from both parties followed suit, threatening to expel him if he refused. The House Ethics Committee announced a probe, and the Manhattan District Attorney's office launched a criminal investigation.

Appearing *on* ~~the~~ *PNBC's* Pramila Jayapal, chair of the House Progressive Caucus, said she would vote to expel both Swalwell and Texas Republican Tony Gonzales from the House of Representatives. Gonzales had been under investigation by the Houses Ethics Committee after having admitted to having a sexual relationship with one of his staffers, who subsequently committed suicide.

Jayapal said, "I think that this is very important that we believe women, and that we show people across the Capitol and across the country that we will not accept this kind of behavior."

Here you have the totally undemocratic ethos of the #MeToo movement spelled out in all its crudity. Whatever one thinks of Swalwell, and the *World Socialist Web Site* has no brief for this run-of-the-mill capitalist politician, there is no presumption of innocence, no trial of fact and no due process. The ethos of the #MeToo witch-hunters is guilty as accused!

Swalwell's political demise cleared the way for the removal of another congressman, Republican Tony Gonzales of Texas, who had already announced he would not run for reelection after admitting to an affair with one of his staff. The woman, who was married with children, committed suicide. Gonzales resigned from Congress under pressure from both parties, shortly after Swalwell did so.

Press accounts claim that billionaire Tom Steyer, who closely trailed Swalwell among Democrats running in the June 2 "jungle primary," would be the most likely beneficiary of Swalwell's removal. Steyer has already spent \$110 million on his own campaign, far more than all other candidates combined, Democratic and Republican.

Former Democratic leader in the state legislature Willie Brown, a long-time power broker in the party, told *USA Today* on Tuesday that the Democrats would benefit from the Swalwell exposure coming before rather than after the June 2 primary, when Swalwell and a Republican would likely have emerged as the two candidates going forward to the general election. According to the newspaper, “Brown speculated that opposing candidates in both parties knew about Swalwell’s alleged misconduct, but only Democrats wanted it to come out before the primary.”

Press accounts based on unnamed congressional officials and aides said that Swalwell’s alleged sexual abuse of women on his staff was widely rumored, suggesting that Democratic leaders may well have decided to make use of a sex scandal to drive him out of the race before the primary. Certainly the top Democrats in California, including Schiff, Pelosi and most members of the California congressional delegation, responded within hours of the *Chronicle* exposure, calling on Swalwell to end his campaign and quit Congress.

The use of such scandals is invariably associated with a shift to the right in capitalist politics. Swalwell was a well-publicized critic of Trump, particularly in his second impeachment over the failed January 2021 coup. He was a constant presence on cable networks and social media since Trump returned to the White House, denouncing his ICE raids against immigrants and other dictatorial moves. His removal likely means a Democratic governor in California more cooperative with the Trump administration.

Republican Congressman Gonzales had also run afoul of the Trump White House, occasionally voting against Trump’s policies and criticizing the most extreme anti-immigrant measures. His district covered the vast rural area along the Rio Grande, from El Paso almost to the Gulf of Mexico.

The swift removal of these congressmen is in sharp contrast to the blockade by the Trump administration—and the Biden administration before it—of any serious investigation into the Jeffrey Epstein affair. The convicted sex trafficker died in his Manhattan prison cell in 2019, under circumstances that suggest murder rather than suicide.

For seven years since then, and for nearly two decades before his death, Epstein served as both a

financial agent and pimp to billionaires, capitalist politicians and even British royalty. Despite the public denunciations by hundreds of former victims, not a single person, other than the deceased Epstein, has ever been prosecuted.

Last Thursday, in a particularly bizarre scene, First Lady Melania Trump gave a surprise press statement denouncing claims on social media relating to her past association with Epstein. She denied that she had been one of Epstein’s victims, or that Epstein had introduced her to Donald Trump, appealed for a congressional hearing to take the testimony of the victims and left without answering questions from the startled press corps.

The Swalwell allegations have temporarily overshadowed Epstein-related matters, and former Attorney General Pam Bondi—fired by Trump for failing to keep the Epstein scandal under wraps—refused to appear before a House committee Tuesday in response to a subpoena. But there is little doubt that further reports and documents on the Epstein case, which implicates wide layers of the corrupt US ruling class, will surface in the coming weeks and months.



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