

Judiciary Panel Votes to Send Impeachment Articles to Full House

December 13, 2019 **by Dan McCue**



WASHINGTON – Sharply divided along party lines, the House Judiciary Committee voted Friday morning to send two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump to the full House for its consideration.

All 23 Democrats on the judiciary committee voted in favor of both articles — abuse of power and obstruction of Congress — while all 17 Republicans voted no.

With the vote, which took just under eight minutes, Trump becomes only the fourth president in American history to face impeachment by the House for “high crimes and misdemeanors.”

The full House is expected to debate and vote on the articles next week, just days before Congress is scheduled to leave on its Christmas recess.

A trial in the Republican-controlled Senate is expected in early 2020, prior to the next presidential election.

After the vote, Rep. Louie Gohmert, a Texas Republican, said it was a “sad day,” and that what had just transpired in the Ways and Means conference room on the Longworth House Office Building was nothing more than “a big show.”

Other Republican members of the committee embraced similar themes. Rep. Debbie Lasko, of Arizona, called the impeachment inquiry “a travesty that has divided the nation.”

Rep. Matt Gaetz, a Republican from Florida, predicted several Democrats will defect to the Republican side when the House takes up the articles.

“There will not be bipartisan support for impeaching the president,” he said. “There will be bipartisan support for acquitting him.”

Friday’s votes came after Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, abruptly ended the panel’s hearing on the articles at 11:15 p.m. Wednesday night, after 14 hours of debate.

“It has been a long two days of consideration of these articles and it is late at night,” Nadler said. “I want the members on both sides of the aisle to think about what has happened over these last two days and search their consciences before we cast our final votes.”

The first article of impeachment accuses Trump of abusing the powers of his office by pressuring Ukraine to announce investigations of his political rival, former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., and a theory that Democrats conspired with Ukraine to interfere in the 2016 election.

They contend he conditioned nearly \$400 million in security assistance for the former Soviet republic and a White House meeting for its leader on the public announcement of the investigations.

The second article accuses him of obstructing Congress, based on an across-the-board defiance of their subpoenas.

On Thursday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she would not pressure individual House Democrats to support the articles when the House considers them next week, asking instead they follow their consciences.

“People have to come to their own conclusions,” she said.

House Democratic leaders anticipate a small number of Democrats may join Republicans in opposing one or both of the articles, but they will still have the votes to impeach.

Appearing with Sean Hannity on Fox News Thursday night, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell dismissed the Democrats’ case against the president as “pretty weak stuff.”

He also predicted there is absolutely no way the articles will get the 67 votes needed for conviction in the Senate.

In a statement, White House spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham said, “This desperate charade of an impeachment inquiry in the House Judiciary Committee has reached its shameful end.

“The President looks forward to receiving in the Senate the fair treatment and due process which continues to be disgracefully denied to him by the House,” she said.

