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Susan Page

Analysis: For Trump and Pelosi, impeachment will shape their legacies and their futures

Аналіз: Для Трампа та Пелосі імпичмент буде формувати їхні спадщини та майбутнє

Стоячи за трибуною перед розділеною Палатою представників, спікер Ненсі Пелосі опускала молоток при проходженні статей імпичменту, звинувачуючи президента в зловживанні владою і перешкоджанні Конгресу. Президент Дональд Трамп в цей час, згуртувавши затятих прихильників на арені в Батл-Крік, штат Мічиган, засудив те, що він назвав „конституційною образою і спробою державного перевороту”. Вони були за 600 миль один від одного, але їх конфронтація визначить спадщину для кожного з них, – пише автор публікації. Д. Трамп, який вже увійшов в історію, коли він несподівано вступив в ексклюзивний клуб американських президентів на виборах 2016 року, заробив ще одну, менш бажану відмінність: імпичмент. І Ненсі Д'Алесандро Пелосі, яка вже увійшла в історію як найвпливовіша жінка в історії американської політики, спочатку заблокувала заклики Демократів до імпичменту, а потім відкрила їм двері. Вже втретє в історії та вперше за це покоління Палата проголосувала за імпичмент президента. Голосування в підконтрольній Демократичній палаті відбулось повністю за партійними принципами. Тепер статті про імпичмент надійдуть до підконтрольного республіканцям Сенату для судового розгляду. Майже всі учасники процесу очікують, що Трампа там виправдають.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/12/18/impeachment-shape-legacy-and-future-trump-and-pelosi-impeachment-shapes-their-legacies-and-futures/2679709001/>

WASHINGTON – The split screen was one for the history books.

Standing at the dais before a divided House of Representatives, Speaker Nancy Pelosi was bringing down the gavel on passage of Articles of Impeachment, charging the president with abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. Rallying fervent supporters at an arena in Battle Creek, Michigan, President Trump was denouncing what he called a Constitutional affront and an attempted coup.

At the end of a long and contentious day, the two were 600 miles apart but in every other way face to face in a confrontation that will define the legacy for each of them. Donald John Trump, who already had made history when he unexpectedly joined the exclusive club of American presidents in the 2016 election, had earned another and [less welcome distinction](#): Impeachment.

And Nancy D'Alesandro Pelosi, who already had made history as the most powerful woman in the history of American politics, had first blocked Democratic calls for impeachment and then opened the door to them. She called every important shot that followed, keeping the inquiry narrowly focused on the [Ukraine controversy](#) and moving more quickly than many thought was possible.

The repercussions of Wednesday's events, though, will be neither narrow in impact nor quickly finished. For just the third time in history, and for the first time in a generation, the [House voted to impeach the president](#). The vote in the Democratic-controlled House was almost entirely along party lines. Now the two Articles of Impeachment will go to the Republican-controlled Senate for a trial. Just about everybody involved expects Trump to be acquitted there.

From 'perfect' call to party switch:: [How we got to the impeachment of Donald Trump](#)

Center stage vs. sharing the spotlight



US President Donald Trump arrives to deliver the State of the Union address, alongside Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Vice President Mike Pence, at the US Capitol in Washington, DC, on February 5, 2019. (Photo: DOUG MILLS, AFP/Getty Images)

Through it all, Trump and Pelosi have been a study in contrasts.

He has been a combative figure at center stage in his defense, opining on testimony, retweeting positive commentary and attacking his attackers – including her. "Will go down in history as worst Speaker," he tweeted Wednesday.

In contrast, while she has been unquestionably in command, she has taken pains to share the spotlight. She has sometimes deferred in public to Intelligence Chairman Adam Schiff of California and Judiciary Chairman Jerry Nadler of New York. She gave Schiff the final, featured speaking slot before the House vote. She sat near the back of the chamber through much of the debate Wednesday – reading papers, sending texts, conferring with Nadler and Schiff and others – as Colorado Rep. Diane DeGette presided.

But both Trump and Pelosi have seen their political standing solidified during the process. The threat of impeachment has [consolidated Trump's support](#) among congressional Republicans, including the handful who initially had expressed discomfort about his actions on Ukraine.

The impeachment fight also has quieted liberal House Democrats who had complained that Pelosi was too cautious by refusing to impeach the president after special counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russian interference. The restiveness among some during the 2018 midterms that it was time for the 79-year-old Pelosi to step down is now only a memory.

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For both sides, the stakes may have gotten too high to contemplate dissent.

Historical allusions flying

During hours of debate on the House floor, Republicans accused Democrats of trying to overturn the judgment of the 63 million voters who elected Trump in the last election. Democrats accused Trump of

trying to subvert the next election by pressuring a foreign leader to dig up dirt on his political rivals. Speakers on both sides called it a sad day for America.



In this photo released by the White House, President Donald Trump, center right, meets with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, standing left, Congressional leadership and others, Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019, in the White House. (Photo: Official White House Photo by Shealah Craighead via A)

Historical allusions were flying.

Rep. Barry Loudermilk, R-Ga., said the crucifixion of Jesus Christ had been more fair. "Pontius Pilate afforded more rights to Jesus than the Democrats have afforded this president," he said.

Rep. Mike Kelly, R-Penn., compared impeachment to Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in World War II. "Another date that will live in infamy," he declared.

Notable quotes: [Jesus got 'more rights' than Trump and other quotes from a historical day](#)

Democrats accused Trump of acting like a tyrant who felt empowered to take any actions he wished and to rebuff congressional oversight. "We don't have kings; we have presidents," protested Georgia Rep. John Lewis. A string of speakers, starting with Pelosi, quoted the words of Benjamin Franklin as he left the Constitutional Convention in 1787. "Well, Doctor, what have we got – a Republic or Monarchy?" a woman is said to have asked. He replied. "A Republic, if you can keep it."

Tweets and measured rhetoric

For all the impassioned rhetoric, though, there was little sense that anyone was actually talking to their colleagues across the aisle, or harboring even faint hopes of changing minds. The audience was on TV, or in the White House. For a momentous debate, there was remarkably little drama and virtually no suspense.

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Trump acknowledged the all-but-inevitable outcome in a morning tweet, at 7:34 a.m. ET, before the proceedings had begun. It was one of [dozens of tweets he would post](#) through the day.

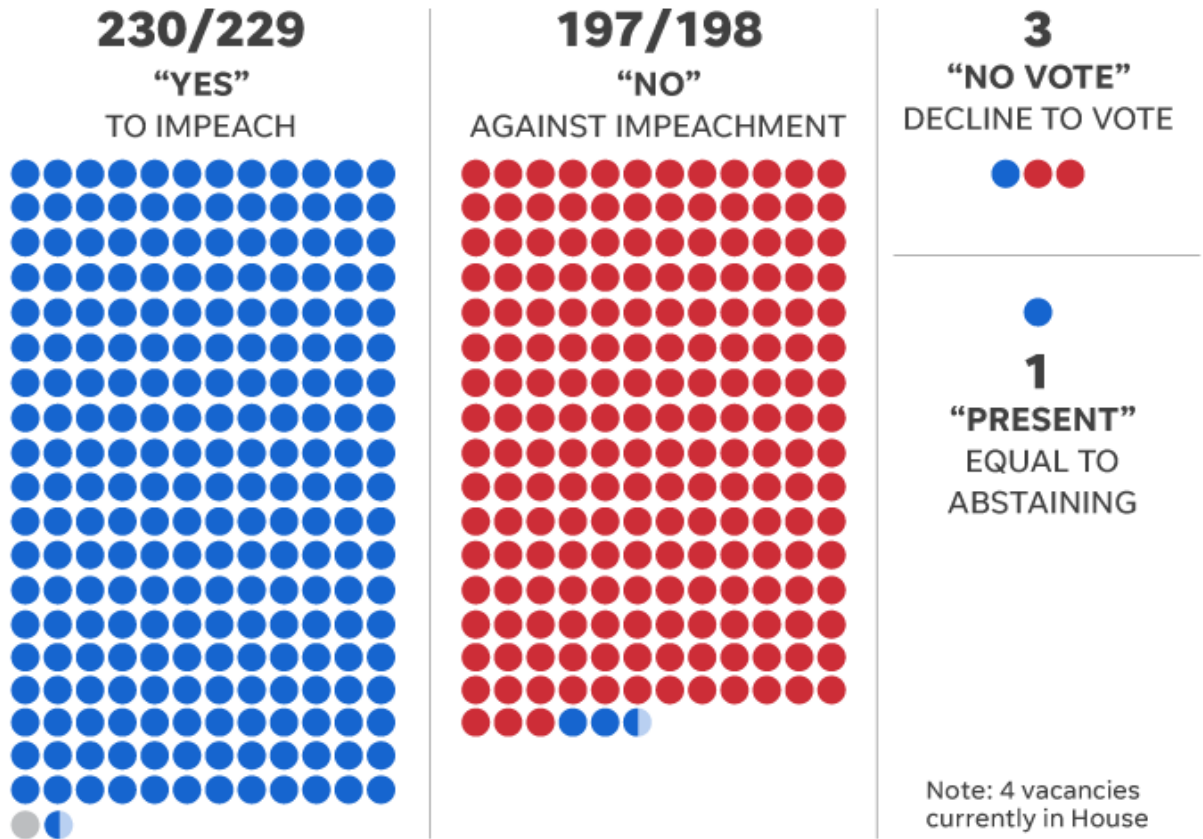
"Can you believe that I will be impeached today by the Radical Left, Do Nothing Democrats, AND I DID NOTHING WRONG!" he wrote. "A terrible Thing. Read the Transcripts. This should never happen to another President again. Say a PRAYER!"

That presumably was a reference to an accusation the president made in a six-page letter on White House stationery that he sent Pelosi Tuesday, full of outrage and grievance. Among other things, he questioned whether she was sincere in saying she prays for him. "You are offending Americans of faith

by continually saying, 'I pray for the President,' when you know this statement is not true, unless it is meant in a negative sense," he said.

How the House voted on impeachment articles

● 233 Democrats ● 197 Republicans ● 1 Independent ● Split vote



Article 1: Yes: 229 Democrats, 1 Independent
Abuse of power No: 195 Republicans, 2 Democrats

Article 2: Yes: 228 Democrats, 1 Independent
Obstruction of Congress No: 195 Republicans, 3 Democrats

SOURCE clerk.house.gov

GRAPHIC Veronica Brave and George Petras/USA TODAY

When Pelosi rose in the House chamber Wednesday, choosing to be the first to speak, her tone was deliberate and measured. Dressed in a dark suit, she wore a favorite brooch, a miniature version of the ceremonial [Mace of the Republic](#), a symbol of the authority of the House. "It is tragic that the president's reckless actions make impeachment necessary; he gave us no choice," she said. Hours later, when she was presiding over the House, she announced the first vote. "Article One is adopted," she declared, then gave a sharp look and an unmistakable gesture at House Democrats who were starting to cheer. She had warned them beforehand not to celebrate, that it was a time to be solemn. The applause instantly stopped.

A polarizing pair

Trump and Pelosi have seen not only their legacies but also their futures tied to the impeachment showdown.



President Donald Trump shakes hands with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as they attend the 38th Annual National Peace Officers Memorial Service on May 15, 2019, in Washington, DC. (Photo: Brendan Smialowski, AFP/Getty Images)

They have long been polarizing figures. In a [USA TODAY/Suffolk University Poll](#) taken last week, both had unfavorable ratings higher than their favorable ones. His favorable rating was underwater by 18 percentage points; hers by 14. His job-approval rating was a bit better than hers, at 48% approve-50% disapprove. Her job-approval rating was 42% approve-50% disapprove.

But they are hugely popular with their own partisans. Trump had the approval of 90% of Republicans; Pelosi had the approval of 80% of Democrats. The poll of 1,000 registered voters, taken Dec. 10-14, has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

USA TODAY poll: [Narrow majority opposes removing Trump from office if he is impeached](#)

Trump now finds himself in uncharted political territory, the only impeached president who has been in his first term and running for re-election. As the House debate was coming to a close, his campaign blasted an email with an appeal for donations to the "Official Pre-Vote Impeachment Defense Fund." GOP aides say impeachment has boosted fundraising and energized core supporters, though the impact on swing voters isn't yet clear.

Read the testimony: [All the transcripts from closed-door testimony in the Trump impeachment inquiry](#)

Pelosi's prospects to win an 18th term in her liberal San Francisco district aren't imperiled by impeachment, but it could be a different story for the 31 House Democrats who represent districts that Trump carried in 2016. Republicans already are targeting them; their defeat could cost Democrats control of the House, and with that eject Pelosi from the Speaker's chair.

"It doesn't really feel like we're being impeached," Trump said, taking the stage in Battle Creek as the voting began in the Capitol. "The country is doing better than ever before. We did nothing wrong. And we have tremendous support in the Republican Party."

Then he assured the crowd: "You're about to hear the great speech you ever heard."

On the House floor, Pelosi, who as speaker rarely casts a vote, took a green ballot on the first Article of Impeachment, filled it out, and handed it to a House clerk. She voted "yes."

House Speaker: [How Pelosi is leading divided Democrats through political turmoil](#)



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., announces the passage of the first article of impeachment, abuse of power, against President Donald Trump by the House of Representatives at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019. (Photo: House Television via AP)