House votes along party lines to impeach Trump

By Mark Moore and Bob Fredericks   December 18, 2019 | 8:24pm | Updated

Donald Trump
AP

The House of Representatives on Wednesday voted almost entirely along party lines to impeach President Trump following a rancorous, daylong debate — making him just the third president in US history to suffer the congressional rebuke.

The historic vote sets up a showdown in the GOP-led Senate, where Republicans have said there is virtually no chance Trump would be convicted and removed from office.

The back-to-back votes came after 8 p.m. on two articles of impeachment, one for abuse of power and the other for obstruction of Congress.

The article to impeach on abuse of power passed 230-197, with Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii) voting "present." Two Democrats — Jeff Van Drew of New Jersey and Collin Peterson of Minnesota — broke ranks and voted with all Republicans against impeachment.

The vote to impeach on obstruction of Congress passed 229-198 with one — Gabbard — again voting "present." Three Democrats — Van Drew, Peterson and Maine's Jared Golden — voted with all Republicans against the charge.

The White House immediately blasted the results, saying in a statement, "Today marks the culmination in the House of one of the most

shameful political episodes in the history of our Nation.

"Without receiving a single Republican vote, and without providing any proof of wrongdoing, Democrats pushed illegitimate articles of impeachment against the President through the House of Representatives."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi — clad in a black dress to mark what she called a "solemn" and "sad" proceeding — said Congress must "defend democracy" by evicting the president from the White House.

Trump, meanwhile, said earlier in the day that despite the Democrats' patriotic talk, they were actually perpetrating "an assault on America."

It was a day marked by hyperbole and over-the top rhetoric from both parties, with Pelosi invoking the Pledge of Allegiance and the Battle of the Bulge and Georgia GOP Rep. Barry Loudermilk saying Jesus Christ got a better deal from Pontius Pilate.

"Last week, in observance of the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, members [of the House of Representatives] traveled to that hallowed ground to express our gratitude to the heroes who sacrificed everything to secure victory of freedom over tyranny, not just for America, but for the world. Today, we are here to defend democracy for the people. May God bless America," Pelosi said after reading several lines from the Pledge, her right hand placed across her heart.
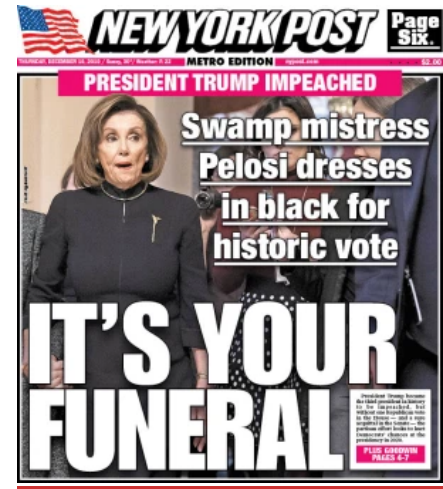
"The veterans of that battle who were there, in their 90s, told us how after the war was won, the Europeans whom they liberated would ask, 'Why did you risk us? You don't know us. And give your lives to save us, we're not Americans.' And our men would say, 'We came here to fight for you, not because you are Americans, but because we are Americans.' "

Loudermilk later weighed in with his biblical analogy.

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"When Jesus was falsely accused of treason, Pontius Pilate gave Jesus the opportunity to face his accusers. During that sham trial, Pontius Pilate afforded more rights to Jesus than Democrats have afforded this president and this process," he said.

Rep. Mike Kelly (R-Pa.) even compared the impeachment vote to the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor.

"On Dec. 7, 1941, a horrific act happened in the United States, and it's one that President Roosevelt said, 'This is a date that will live in infamy.' Today, Dec. 18th, 2019, is another date that will live in infamy," he said.