

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading.
3. Write a 1+ page reflection.

Battle Over Impeachment Witnesses Escalates

Key players in President Donald Trump's impending trial amplified their arguments on the Sunday news shows.

Source: Politico.com, January 19, 2020

With President Donald Trump's impeachment trial just two days away, the battle over whether to call witnesses during the proceedings, including former national security adviser John Bolton, continues to heat up.

Several of the House managers for the impeachment trial, including Reps. Adam Schiff of California, Jerry Nadler and Hakeem Jeffries of New York, and Jason Crow of Colorado, appeared on Sunday news shows to urge the Senate to allow new witnesses and evidence during the process as they seek to oust Trump from office. These Democrats repeatedly pushed the line that the only way to get a "fair trial" is through additional testimony and documents.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and other Republicans intend to offer an organizing resolution for the trial that postpones the question of calling witnesses until the House has presented its case and the president's legal team responds. Then, following a period in which senators are allowed to ask questions of both sides, the Senate will hold a vote on whether to call more witnesses. If no witnesses are called, the trial can move to its final stages, possibly by the time Trump gives his State of the Union address on Feb. 4.

"If the Senate decides, if Senator McConnell prevails and there are no witnesses, it will be the first impeachment trial in history that goes to conclusion without witnesses," Schiff, the lead House manager for the trial, said during an appearance on ABC's "This Week."

"The threshold issue here is, will there be a fair trial? Will the senators allow the House to call witnesses to introduce documents? That is the foundational issue on which everything else rests. And one thing that the public is overwhelmingly in support of, and that is a fair trial."

Jeffries added on "Fox News Sunday": "The most important thing is that the American people deserve a fair trial. The Constitution deserves a fair trial. Our democracy deserves a fair trial. And we believe that a fair trial involves witnesses. It involves evidence. It involves documents."

But Senate Republicans, led by Sens. John Cornyn of Texas and David Perdue of Georgia, countered that the House managers should proceed with the evidence they used to impeach Trump in the House.

And Republicans echoed the White House line that the House impeachment hearings violated Trump's right to due process, despite the fact that the president refused to allow his lawyers to participate in those sessions.

"I find it curious that Chairman Nadler of the Judiciary Committee called this a 'rock-solid' case," Cornyn said on CBS' "Face The Nation. "But if the House isn't prepared to go forward with the evidence that they produced in the impeachment inquiry, maybe they ought to withdraw the articles of impeachment and start over again. This isn't the Senate's responsibility to make the case."

"This, to me, seems to undermine or indicate that they're getting cold feet or have a lack of confidence in what they've done so far," Cornyn added.

Perdue said on NBC's "Meet The Press": "Remember, this week is going to be the first time America gets to hear President Trump's defense. He hasn't had an opportunity to do that

yet. It's clear the president did not have due process in the House. Now, for the first time, we'll have due process in the Senate."

A number of Senate Republicans, including Cornyn, have called for former Vice President Joe Biden's son Hunter to be deposed if Bolton testifies in the case. Trump allies are calling this "witness reciprocity," and McConnell appears open to their demand, according to GOP aides familiar with these discussions.

Yet Nadler, Schiff and the other House managers maintain that Hunter Biden is not germane to the case, since he cannot speak to the underlying issue of whether Trump improperly withheld U.S. aid to Ukraine contingent on officials there announcing an investigation into the Bidens.

"And this whole controversy about whether there should be witnesses is just really a question of, does the Senate want to have a fair trial ... or are they part of the cover-up of the president?" Nadler said on "Face The Nation." "Any Republican senator who says there should be no witnesses or even that witnesses should be negotiated is part of the cover-up."

So far, only three Senate Republicans — Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Mitt Romney of Utah — have publicly declared that they're open to hearing from additional witnesses, including Bolton. But in order for that to occur, at least one more Senate Republican would have to withstand Trump's pressure and cross the aisle to vote with the 47 Senate Democrats.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) has been appealing to Republicans for weeks to support Democrats on this issue, pointing to new evidence that has emerged since the House voted on Dec. 18 to impeach Trump. This additional evidence includes Bolton's public offer to testify before the Senate; the Government Accountability Office analysis that the White House violated federal law by withholding the Ukraine funds after Congress had appropriated the money; and new documents turned over to the House Intelligence Committee by Lev Parnas, an indicted associate of Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, on the role Giuliani played in the Ukraine scandal.

"Both the revelations about Mr. Parnas and the GAO opinion strengthen our push for witnesses and documents in the trial," Schumer said on Thursday as the trial formally began. "The GAO opinion, especially, makes clear that the documents we requested in our letter to Leader McConnell are even more needed now than when we requested it last month. Because President Trump, simply put, broke the law. Every senator will get a chance to vote to obtain these documents next week."

Possible Response Questions:

- What are your thoughts on the impending impeachment trial? Explain.
- Pick a word/line/passage from the article and respond to it.
- Discuss a "move" made by the writer in this piece that you think is good/interesting. Explain.