

## World News Roundup

## Politics

## Fiercely divided camps

## Trump impeachment vote underscores 'partisan' era

WASHINGTON, Dec 15, (AP): This coming week's virtually certain House impeachment of President Donald Trump will underscore how Democrats and Republicans have morphed into fiercely divided camps since lawmakers impeached President Bill Clinton.

Twenty-one years ago this Thursday, a Republican-led House approved two impeachment articles against Democrat Clinton. While that battle was bitterly partisan, it was blurrier than the near party-line votes expected this week when the House, now run by Democrats, is poised to impeach Republican Trump.

Two of the four Clinton impeachment articles were killed — something party leaders today would jump through hoops to avoid for fear of highlighting divisions. All four Clinton articles drew GOP opposition, peaking at 81 on one vote. That's an unthinkable number of defections today.



Pelosi

"Obviously it was partisan, but it wasn't as intensely partisan as today is," said Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., one of four Republicans who opposed all the Clinton impeachment articles and the last remaining member of that group in Congress. "So you could basically argue conscience, you could say you looked at it and didn't think this was the way to go."

In the upcoming votes on impeaching Trump, Democrats expect support from all but a few two to perhaps five — of their members. Republican leaders envision no GOP desertions.

Underscoring the intensity of the partisanship, Rep. Jeff Van Drew of New Jersey, one of the Democrats planning to oppose impeachment, intends to switch parties and join the GOP. That's according to a Republican official who said top House Republicans have been told of Van Drew's plans and described the conversations on condition of anonymity.

## Defections

Few defections are expected by either party when the GOP-run Senate holds a trial, probably in January, on whether to oust Trump from office. No one expects Democrats to muster the two-thirds Senate majority needed for removal over charges that he leveraged U.S. military aid and a White House meeting coveted by Ukrainian leaders to pressure them to announce investigations of his Democratic political foes.

Most Democrats were dismissive of the GOP's impeachment charges that Clinton lied to a grand jury and others about his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

"The Constitution is really to protect the nation against the abuse of presidential power. Any husband could lie under oath about an affair. It doesn't take presidential powers to do that," Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., who opposed the Clinton impeachment and is still in Congress, said in an interview Friday.

Clinton was a lame duck but widely popular president who was presiding over a booming economy, and polling showed that impeachment had little support. That gave Democrats little reason to back the effort to remove him and made many Republicans think twice about backing impeachment.

Back then, each party had scores of moderate lawmakers who would cross party lines on issues such as abortion, taxes and spending.

That helps explain why 81 Republicans opposed one defeated Clinton impeachment article. The other three articles drew 28, 12 and 5 GOP "no" votes. No more than five Democrats backed any of the articles impeaching Clinton.

Former Rep. Tom DeLay, R-Texas, was chief House GOP vote counter in 1998 and was known as "The Hammer" for his effectiveness in lining up support. In an interview Friday, he said he urged wavering Republicans to read evidence gathered by Ken Starr, the independent counsel who headed the investigation into Clinton that led to the impeachment.

DeLay said party leaders "cannot break arms" on an impeachment vote because it is too important. That echoes current Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., who has said she's not lobbying Democrats on the upcoming Trump vote.

"I knew where the votes were all along, and why they were wavering and why they were struggling," DeLay said. "The questions they had, we wanted to make sure that we got answers for them."

The numbers of moderate House Democrats and Republicans have dwindled dramatically, especially among the GOP. Only three House Republicans represent districts that Democrat Hillary Clinton carried in the 2016 presidential election, yet all three are expected to oppose Trump's impeachment.

## Reelection

Trump faces reelection next year and has a strong track record of weaponizing Twitter to demolish the political careers of Republicans who oppose him. Retired GOP Sens. Jeff Flake of Arizona and Bob Corker of Tennessee left Congress following running battles with Trump, and South Carolina Rep. Mark Sanford lost a party primary last year after running afoul of him.

"If you cross Trump, you're a short-timer when it comes to politics," said John Feehery, a GOP consultant and former House leadership aide.

In contrast, several House Republicans who opposed at least one Clinton impeachment article saw their political careers prosper. They include John Thune of South Dakota, now the No. 2 Senate GOP leader; John Kasich, who became a two-term Ohio governor and challenged Trump for the 2016 presidential nomination; and current Sens. Rob Portman of Ohio and Richard Burr of North Carolina.

Sanford rose to South Carolina governor, but abandoned the job after admitting to an extramarital affair. He returned to the House but was defeated after clashing with Trump.

Clinton's impeachment came four years after Republicans led by Rep. Newt Gingrich of Georgia captured House control for the first time in four decades.

Gingrich became speaker and embraced aggressive confrontations with Democrats. That culminated in the House impeachment of Clinton, which the GOP-led Senate later rejecting. But even the Gingrich era's battles were tamer than today's fights, with Clinton's impeachment a case in point.

The calendar of both impeachment votes also helps explain why party divisions will be sharper this time than they were for Clinton.

The House's Clinton impeachment votes came a month after congressional elections, giving incumbents two years — a lifetime in politics — until they next faced voters.

This year's Trump impeachment votes will come as the 2020 primary season is about to begin, putting recalcitrant Republicans at risk of facing Trump-backed primary challengers.



US President Donald Trump watches a flyover along with Navy midshipmen before an NCAA college football game between Army and Navy on Dec 14 in Philadelphia. (AP)

## Education

## Hopefuls pledge more money for schools, teachers

## Dems cast rare spotlight on education

PITTSBURGH, Dec 15, (AP): Democratic presidential candidates pledged to boost funding for public schools, increase teacher salaries and reduce college debt at a Saturday forum that cast a rare spotlight on education, an issue that has received only passing attention in recent debates.

The event was billed as an opportunity to press candidates for more detail on their education plans, but it was also a chance for Democrats to vie for endorsements from the nation's two major teachers unions, which were among several groups organizing the forum.

Facing an audience of teachers and parents, seven candidates vowed to overhaul an education system that they say helps the rich, hurts the poor and fails to pay teachers the salaries they deserve.

They blamed the funding process that underpins the nation's public schools: Districts rely heavily on local property taxes, leading to wide education imbalances between rich and poor areas. Most of the candidates are promising to close the gap through large increases in federal funding for schools that teach low-income students.

"We've got to make sure our children have equal opportunities," said Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren. "A child born into privilege has great opportunity in this country. I want every child to have great opportunity."

Warren's plan would add \$800 billion in federal funding to the nation's public schools through a tax on the wealthy. It promises to quadruple federal Title I funding for low-income schools. Others including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg promise to triple that funding source.

Candidates were united in calling for greater respect — and pay — for the nation's teachers. Many propose federal funding increases to bring pay in line with that of other professions. Sanders, who supports a starting salary of \$60,000, said it's "absurd" that there are teachers in some states mak-

ing \$28,000 a year.

"We are going to make sure that every teacher in this country is adequately paid," Sanders said. "If you prize education then you've got to respect the educators who provide that education. It does say something about our country that there are teachers out there working two or three jobs."

The candidates checked many of the boxes the unions will look for when they decide which candidate to support. Many of the candidates took shots at the prevalence of high-stakes testing, curriculum requirements and other measures that limit teachers' flexibility.

## Target

They also joined against a common foe who has become a regular target on the campaign trail: Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar said that, if elected, the first thing she would do is fire DeVos. Buttigieg said he would appoint a secretary "who actually believes in public education." Former Vice President Joe Biden said he would reverse DeVos' rules guiding colleges on sexual misconduct.

Warren drew some of the strongest applause of the day when she vowed to curb the expansion of charter schools, which are publicly funded but privately operated. Teachers unions have opposed charter schools, saying they unfairly draw money away from traditional public schools. Warren suggested she shares that criticism.

"Public school money needs to stay in public schools," Warren said. "It will be my responsibility as president of the United States to make certain that every public school is an excellent public school."

There was little further discussion of the topic, even though it loomed over the forum in other ways. Even before the event started, charter school supporters criticized it as a "public relations stunt" that intentionally omitted their voices. Dozens of protesters

gathered near the convention center in downtown Pittsburgh to show support for charters.

As the candidates tried to win over the audience, many made efforts to tout their education and labor credentials.

Warren noted that she's a former special education teacher. Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet, a former Denver Public Schools superintendent, said he's the first former superintendent to run for president. Billionaire Tom Steyer noted that he led a 2012 proposition in California that helped rebuild public schools "with union labor."

For candidates, it was one way to stand apart in a crowd of Democrats with relatively similar proposals on elementary and secondary education. But their proposals on college affordability and student debt cover wider ground.

In one camp are Warren and Sanders, who have proposed free public college for all Americans and the cancellation of all or most of the nation's existing student debt. Others have stuck to more moderate proposals for free community college or debt-free college.

The crowd erupted with applause when Sanders said he would cancel all existing student debt, and Warren drew applause when she said her plan would cancel debt for 43 million Americans.

But Buttigieg doubled down on his criticism of those plans, saying there needs to be more discussion about apprenticeships, internships and other options other than a four-year degree. He has supported free college for families making under \$100,000.

Biden continued to push for free community college. Bennet, meanwhile, focused instead on his proposal for free preschool and played down free college. Although he backs a plan that would allow students to graduate from college without debt, Bennet said he believes Americans are "a hell of a lot more interested in free preschool than free college."

adviser who was credited with helping to save New York City from ruin during the 1970s as chairman of the agency that oversaw the city's finances, died Saturday. He was 91.

Rohatyn's son Nicolas Rohatyn said his father died at his Manhattan home. The cause was "simply old age," he said.

Born in Vienna in 1928, Rohatyn (pronounced ROH-uh-tin) fled Nazi-occupied France with his family in 1940 and arrived in the United States in 1942.

After rising to prominence with the banking firm Lazard, formerly Lazard

Freres, Rohatyn was named chairman of the state-appointed Municipal Assistance Corporation in 1975. The position, which he held until 1993, gave him power over taxes and spending in the nation's largest city that was unusual for someone who did not hold elected office.

As chairman of the agency, Rohatyn pushed the financially strapped city to make reforms including a municipal wage freeze and charging tuition at the formerly free City University of New York. Rohatyn wrote in the agency's annual report that the alternative to such cutbacks, which were

criticized by many New Yorkers, "would have been bankruptcy for the city, which would have generated infinitely greater social costs."

Rohatyn likened his work brokering financial deals to the job of a surgeon. "I get called when something is broken," he told The Associated Press in 1978. "I'm supposed to operate, fix it up and leave as little blood on the floor as possible."

A longtime Democratic donor, Rohatyn was President Bill Clinton's first choice for vice chairman of the Federal Reserve in 1996, but he withdrew from consideration for the post due to opposition in the Republican-controlled Senate.

Clinton named Rohatyn ambassador to France instead, and he served in the position from 1997 to 2000.

Rohatyn returned to Lazard as a senior adviser in 2010 and remained active in public life well into his 80s. Democratic New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo named him co-chairman of a commission dedicated to improving the resilience of the state's infrastructure following Superstorm Sandy in 2012.

Rohatyn was a frequent contributor to the New York Review of Books and the author of books including "Bold Endeavors: How Our Government Built America, and Why It Must Rebuild Now," published in 2009, and "Dealings: A Political and Financial Life," published in 2010.

Rohatyn married Jeanette Streit in 1956. Their marriage ended in divorce. He married the former Elizabeth Fly in 1979. She died in 2016. Rohatyn's survivors include sons Pierre, Nicolas and Michael, stepdaughter Nina Griscorn and six grandchildren. (AP)



First time volunteer Brenda Espino helps hand out hams, turkeys and sacks of potatoes to families during the annual Food and Toy Run event in Grass Valley, Calif on Dec 14. (AP)



Turner



Rohatyn

## America

**Houston Mayor Turner wins:** Houston's incumbent mayor won a second term on Saturday night, holding off a millionaire trial lawyer whose previous support of President Donald Trump had become one of the main campaign issues.

Mayor Sylvester Turner defeated Tony Buzbee during Saturday's runoff election. Unofficial results released by the Harris County Clerk's Office on Sunday morning show Turner capturing just over 56% of the vote. More than 200,000 votes were cast.

In seeking a second term, Turner touted guiding Houston through the devastating floods of Hurricane Harvey in 2017 and reducing the city's huge pension debt as some of his accomplishments.

It was the second mayoral runoff won by Turner, who was a longtime Texas Democratic legislator before taking the reins of Houston, the nation's fourth largest city and one of the most racially and ethnically diverse in the country.

In 2015, Turner narrowly beat his runoff opponent by about 2 percentage points.

Turner and Buzbee ended up in the runoff as neither candidate got more than 50% of the vote during the Nov. 5 election, which featured 12 mayoral candidates.

Saturday's runoff ended what had been a mostly bitter mayoral race.

While city elections are nonpartisan, Buzbee drew most of his support from Republicans while Turner's backing came mostly from Democrats.

Turner had highlighted Buzbee hosting a fundraiser for Trump in 2016 and donating \$500,000 to his presidential inauguration committee. Trump remains deeply unpopular in the mostly Democratic city.

"It's getting increasingly hard for a Republican candidate, particularly one that was linked very closely with President Trump ... to break through" in Houston, said Renee Cross, the senior director of the Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston.

Buzbee, a former Marine who made his fortune taking down big corporations in court, rejected partisan labels and denounced comparisons to Trump as "silly foolishness." As a trial lawyer, Buzbee lavishly donated to both Republicans and Democrats.

He ran on a campaign of rooting out cronyism at City Hall and poured millions of his own fortune into the race. Buzbee portrayed Turner as a career politician who is beholden to special interest groups.

While the race leading up to the Nov 5 vote was full of bluster between Turner and Buzbee, the campaigning during the runoff was more subdued. (AP)

**NYC savior Rohatyn dies:** Felix Rohatyn, the financier and government



Democratic presidential candidate businessman Andrew Yang smiles while taking the stage with his wife Evelyn Yang during a campaign rally at South East Junior High School on Dec 14 in Iowa City, Iowa. (AP)