

Democratic congressman leaving his party over impeachment, will join Republican Party

Just four days after he denied he would switch parties.

Democratic Rep. Jeff Van Drew (N.J.), one of the only Democratic lawmakers to vocally oppose President Donald Trump's impeachment, is switching political parties, according to multiple reports.

Politico reported that "the question now was when, not if, Van Drew was joining the Republican Party."

The Washington Post reported:

Officials said Saturday that Rep. Jeff Van Drew of New Jersey, a vocally anti-impeachment Democrat, will join the Republican Party in the coming days following a Friday meeting with President Trump — a move that would put a political chill on the Democrats' expected vote to impeach Trump next week.

Two Democratic officials familiar with Van Drew's discussions in recent days said they believe he has decided to switch parties. The White House meeting was confirmed by a Trump administration official and one of the Democratic officials.

According to the New York Times, an announcement formalizing Van Drew's transition to the Republican Party will come sometime next week.

Van Drew, who defeated a Republican in 2018 to take over New Jersey's second congressional district, is one of the most conservative members of the Democratic Party. Van Drew and Rep. Collin C. Peterson (D-Minn.) were the only two Democrats to vote against the House resolution that formalized the Democrat-led impeachment inquiry against the president.

Motivations for the party switch are likely two-fold.

First, Van Drew's impeachment opposition would have slimmed his chances of

winning a Democratic primary next year. Second, the Republican Party had already indicated that it was targeting Van Drew in its effort to retake control of the House. Because the Senate will most likely acquit the president, being a Republican is politically advantageous for Van Drew and his 2020 re-election.

Reports of Van Drew's planned Democratic Party abdication come just four days after he denied that he might switch parties.

"I'm not changing anything — just doing my job. I'm still a Democrat, right here," he told reporters Tuesday, the Post reported.

Source:

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