

GOP senators move to dismiss articles of impeachment amid battle with Pelosi

Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri joined with a host of fellow Republicans Monday to introduce a resolution allowing the chamber to dismiss articles of impeachment against President Trump for lack of prosecution, as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi delays sending the case for trial.

The resolution specifically would update Senate rules to allow the chamber to bring a motion dismissing the articles.

JOHN BOLTON: I WILL TESTIFY IN IMPEACHMENT TRIAL IF SUBPOENAED

“In the real world, when a prosecutor brings a case but refuses to try it, the court has the ability and the defendant has the right – the constitutional right, I might add — to have those articles, those indictments, those charges dismissed,” Hawley said in a speech on the Senate floor. “That is precisely the action that I am proposing today.”

Hawley joined with co-sponsors Sens. Rick Scott of Florida; Mike Braun of Indiana; Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee; Ted Cruz of Texas; Steve Daines of Montana; John Barrasso of Wyoming; Tom Cotton of Arkansas; Joni Ernst of Iowa; David Perdue of Georgia; and Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma.

“Speaker Pelosi started this bogus impeachment by claiming President Trump was an urgent ‘threat to democracy’ who had to be removed now,” Hawley said in a statement Monday. “But after a bipartisan vote against the articles in the House, and with the public opposed to the Democrats’ partisan games, Pelosi has changed her tune. Now she wants to prevent a Senate trial, perhaps indefinitely. But the Constitution gives the Senate sole power to adjudicate articles of impeachment, not the House.”

He added: “If Speaker Pelosi is afraid to try her case, the articles should be dismissed for failure to prosecute and Congress should get back to doing the

people's business."

The Senate currently has a set of 26 rules that govern all impeachment proceedings, which presume a "prompt delivery of the articles of impeachment to the Senate following their adoption by the House."

But last month, the House voted to adopt two articles of impeachment against the president—abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. Pelosi, after the vote, said she wanted reassurances that the Senate would hold a fair trial, involving certain Democrat-sought witnesses, before sending over the articles of the Senate to begin proceedings. Pelosi, who has been sitting on the articles of impeachment since before Christmas, has yet to transmit them to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Hawley's resolution would allow the Senate to dismiss the articles of impeachment for lack of prosecution, once the House has withheld articles for 25 calendar days or more. Under the proposed rule, any senator would be able to move to dismiss the articles once the time period has elapsed. That motion would then be voted upon by the full Senate.

IMPEACHMENT IMPASSE DEEPENS AS MCCONNELL REJECTS PELOSI'S BID TO SHAPE TRIAL: 'THEIR TURN IS OVER'

At this point, Pelosi has held the articles of impeachment for 19 days. The House voted to adopt the articles on Dec. 18, 2019.

"After three years of searching for a reason to impeach this president, Democrats in the House cannot seem to find the time to send over the articles of impeachment," Blackburn said in a statement Monday. "If House Democrats are so confident in their findings, they ought to have no problem sending the articles over within a 25-day deadline."

On Friday, McConnell spoke from the Senate floor, rejecting Pelosi's efforts to shape a pending impeachment trial, calling it a "fantasy."

"Their turn is over. They've done enough damage. It's the Senate's turn now to render sober judgment," he said while stressing that the Senate cannot hold a trial unless and until Pelosi transmits the two articles.

At the center of the inquiry is Trump's efforts to press Ukraine to launch

politically related investigations — regarding former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter’s dealings in Ukraine, as well as issues related to the 2016 presidential election.

The president’s request came after millions of dollars in U.S. military aid to Ukraine had been frozen, which Democrats argue shows a “quid pro quo” arrangement. Trump has denied any wrongdoing.

McConnell indicated that the Senate process is at a standstill for now, and accused the House of getting “cold feet.”

“The same people who spent weeks screaming that impeachment was so urgent ... now decided it could wait indefinitely while they check the political winds and look for some new talking points,” he said.

Meanwhile, Senate Democrats are seeking high-level witnesses and documents as part of a potential Senate trial.

“Will we fulfill our duty to conduct a fair impeachment trial of the president of the United States or will we not? That is the most pressing question facing this Senate,” Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said last week. “The country just saw McConnell’s answer to that question. The answer is no.”

Schumer argued that McConnell is ignoring “the only one precedent that matters here.”

“Never, never in the history of our country has there been an impeachment trial in which the Senate was denied the ability to hear from witnesses, yet the Republican leader seems intent on violating that precedent and denying critical evidence to this body and to the American people,” Schumer said, adding that McConnell has “no intention to be impartial.”

One of those highly sought-after witnesses is former National Security Adviser John Bolton, who said in a statement Monday that he would testify in a potential impeachment trial should he be subpoenaed by the Senate.

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