

House Dem now sees no 'value' in impeachment, as polls show falling support among independents

Michigan Democratic Rep. Brenda Lawrence, a prominent supporter of Kamala Harris who has previously supported the impeachment inquiry into President Trump, abruptly announced Sunday that she no longer saw any "value" in the process and called for her fellow Democrats to throw their support behind a symbolic censure resolution.

Lawrence's about-face came as polls have shown that independents are souring on the idea of impeaching and removing Trump from office, including in critical battleground states like Wisconsin, even as House Democrats aggressively presented their poll-tested "bribery" case against the president over the past two weeks.

"We are so close to an election," Lawrence said Sunday on a Michigan radio program, noting that Trump stands little chance of being convicted by the GOP-controlled Senate. "I will tell you, sitting here knowing how divided this country is, I don't see the value of taking him out of office. But I do see the value of putting down a marker saying his behavior is not acceptable. It's in violation of the oath of office of a president of the United States, and we have to be clear that you cannot use your power of the presidency to withhold funds to get a foreign country to investigate an American citizen for your own personal gain. There's no way around that."

Lawrence continued: "I want him censured. I want it on the record that the House of Representatives did their job and they told this president and any president coming behind him that this is unacceptable behavior and, under our Constitution, we will not allow it. ... I am a Democrat, but I am an independent United States of America citizen."

Lawrence occupies a safely Democratic district that includes eastern Detroit, and her reluctance to move forward with impeachment suggested that moderate Democrats in swing districts may also be getting cold feet now that all scheduled hearings in the probe wrapped up last week.

Recent surveys indicate that even Democratic voters are losing interest in impeachment. Meanwhile, 50 percent of independents questioned in an NPR/PBS/Marist poll conducted Nov. 11-15 did not support impeaching and removing Trump from office, with just 42 percent backing such a move. That's a noticeable dip in support compared with the previous NPR/PBS/Marist poll - conducted the first week in October - when support stood at 45 percent.

And, a Gallup poll conducted the first two weeks of November indicated that 45 percent of independent voters supported impeaching and removing the president - with 53 percent opposing the move. That's a switch from October when the previous Gallup survey put the split at 53-44 percent.



Michigan Democratic Rep. Brenda Lawrence said she no longer sees any “value” in impeachment, and called for a censure resolution. (House of Representatives)

Republicans could also use a Senate trial to turn the tables and damage Democrats politically, should the House vote to impeach.

The Washington Examiner noted that in a radio interview Oct. 4, before support for impeachment fell sharply, Lawrence was far more supportive of the proceedings against the president.

“I feel strongly that for my legacy, for my time in history, sitting here at this table with an oath of office to protect this country, to protect the democracy of the

United States of America, I cannot sit silent, that I must move forward with [impeachment] because this is egregious,” Lawrence said in October.

The House is now comprised of 431 members, meaning Democrats need 217 yeas to impeach Trump. There are currently 233 Democrats, so Democrats can only lose 16 of their own and still impeach the president. 31 House Democrats represent more moderate districts that Trump carried in 2016.

TWO WITNESSES UNDERCUT IMPROPER ‘QUID PRO QUO’ CLAIMS; DEMS’ STAR WITNESS SONDLAND SAYS HE ‘PRESUMED,’ ‘GUESSED’



Donald J. Trump@realDonaldTrump

But I did nothing wrong. Read the Transcripts (2)!
<https://twitter.com/johnrobertsfox/status/1197884074540650498> ...

John Roberts@johnrobertsFox

With all the talk of whether to censure @realDonaldTrump , I thought it would be interesting to see a picture of the first President to be censured by Congress



There have been signs close to home for Lawrence that Democrats should consider pulling the ripcord on the impeachment process. In an editorial last week, The Detroit News wrote that the House “should censure, not impeach” the president.

“Democrats still don’t have the strong case they’re seeking to justify removing President Donald Trump from office,” the paper wrote. “Censure amounts to a public shaming. ... But it also recognizes the offense does not merit removal from office. That, too, seems appropriate, given the inconclusive testimony so far.”

SCHIFF SUGGESTS IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY TO WRAP UP SHORTLY AFTER THANKSGIVING

Earlier this month, freshman Rep. Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich. — who flipped a GOP district in 2018 that Trump won by 7 points in 2016 — told Fox News that she was tentatively weighing all the evidence.

“My constituents expect me to make an objective decision,” Slotkin said as the hearings concluded, “not one based on an hour of testimony.”

Slotkin went on to acknowledge that launching an impeachment inquiry was a “politically tough thing to do.”

The censure process is not prescribed by the Constitution, and amounts essentially to a condemnation of conduct, without any substantive consequence, by a majority vote in either the House or the Senate.

“I don’t see the value of taking him out of office. ... I want him censured.”

— Michigan Democratic Rep. Brenda Lawrence

President Andrew Jackson was censured in a largely political process by the Senate in 1834, although it was expunged three years later. Several other U.S. presidents have been reprimanded by Congress, including Abraham Lincoln, James Buchanan, and William Howard Taft.

Still, top Democrats have signaled they will go ahead with impeachment, at least for now. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., announced Monday that Democrats “are now preparing a report” for the House Judiciary Committee, indicating that his panel is wrapping up its work and that the next phase of the impeachment inquiry is imminent.

BLOOMBERG, IN FIRST CAMPAIGN APPEARANCE, WARNS THAT TRUMP IS IN POSITION TO WIN IN 2020

Calling the evidence against the president “overwhelming, unchallenged and damning,” Schiff nevertheless asserted that investigative work would continue, and left open the possibility that Democrats would hold additional hearings. But all scheduled public hearings before Schiff’s panel wrapped up on a testy note last week, and no new proceedings are planned.

“As required under, House Resolution 660 the Committees are now preparing a report summarizing the evidence we have found this far, which will be transmitted to the Judiciary Committee soon after Congress returns from the Thanksgiving recess,” Schiff wrote in a letter to congressional colleagues.

He noted that the report “will catalog the instances of non-compliance with lawful subpoenas as part of our report to the Judiciary Committee, which will allow that committee to consider whether an article of impeachment based on obstruction of Congress is warranted along with an article or articles based on this underlying conduct or other presidential misconduct. Such obstruction was the basis of the third article of impeachment against President Richard Nixon.”

Source:

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/house-dem-reverses-course-on-impeachment-as-polls-show-declining-support-i-want-to-censure>

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