Senate acquits Trump on abuse of power, obstruction of Congress charges

The Senate overwhelmingly acquitted President Trump on both articles of impeachment against him Wednesday afternoon following a brief trial, in a historic rejection of Democrats' claims that the president's Ukraine dealings and handling of congressional subpoenas merited his immediate removal from office.

All Democratic senators supported convicting the president of abuse of power and obstruction of justice, including swing-vote moderate Sens. Joe Manchin, D-W.V., Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., and Doug Jones, R-Ala.

The only party defection was on the abuse of power charge from Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, who declared hours before the final vote that Trump had engaged in as "destructive an attack on the oath of office and our Constitution as I can imagine." Romney voted not guilty on the obstruction charge.

By a final vote of 52-48 against conviction on the abuse of power charge and 53-47 on the obstruction charge, the Senate fell far short of the two-thirds majority needed to convict and remove the president. Swing-vote Republican senators — including Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Susan Collins of Maine, and Lamar Alexander of Tennessee — voted to acquit on both counts.

FOX NEWS EXCLUSIVE: ROMNEY EXPLAINS HIS VOTE

The separate obstruction of Congress charge concerned the Trump administration's assertion of executive privilege and refusal to comply with congressional subpoenas. Romney explained he would acquit on the obstruction count, saying House Democrats had chosen not to respond to the White House's legal arguments against the subpoenas.

While the result has been expected for months, the process brought a series of surprises and heightened animosity to Washington — exemplified dramatically during Tuesday night's State of the Union address, in which House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., furiously ripped up the president's speech upon its

conclusion.

Also ahead of the vote, Republican and Democratic leaders addressed the Senate. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., warned of "truly dangerous" Democratic partisans, saying they insist on taking down institutions that do not produce the outcomes they desire.

"This partisan impeachment will end today," McConnell said. "But, I fear the threat to our institutions may not. Normally, when a party loses an election, it accepts defeat. ... But not this time."

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Instead, McConnell went on, top Democrats — including Hillary Clinton and Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif. — have already preemptively challenged the validity of the 2020 presidential election, and blamed their loss on unsubstantiated claims that the president's campaign colluded with Russians.

Minutes earlier, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., slammed the Senate trial as a "kangaroo court" and a "sham."

Pelosi formally announced the beginning of impeachment proceedings last September, although freshmen and high-ranking Democrats, commentators, and even the Ukraine whistleblower's attorney had urgently called for the president's removal for far longer.

The House of Representatives then voted to impeach the president by majority vote last December, with no Republicans supporting impeachment and several Democrats opposing it. After a weekslong delay, the House transmitted the articles of impeachment to the GOP-controlled Senate.

Fox News' Chad Pergram and Jason Donner contributed to this report.

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