

Both Sides Fire Shots as Senate Votes to Move Forward With Impeachment Trial

The Senate convened at 1 p.m. Eastern today for the second impeachment trial of former President Donald J. Trump in a process most outlets say is almost certain to end in acquittal.

But that projected outcome prevented neither Trump's attorneys nor House managers from pressing hard for the merits of their positions before senators voted 56-44 to continue with the trial. Six Republicans joined all 50 Democratic senators in a vote to move forward.

Trump faces one article of impeachment for "incitement of insurrection" for his conduct leading up to the breach of the Capitol on Jan. 6.

The day's proceedings began with arguments from each side on the constitutionality of the case. Sen. Jamie Raskin, D-Maryland, lead House Impeachment manager, played a graphic video montage of footage taken during and after the Jan. 6 siege on the U.S. Capitol interspersed with scenes from the preceding Trump rally, at which Trump is accused of inciting violence. Other footage included scenes from inside both chambers of Congress.

Raskin broke down in tears as he described the personal grief and horror the events of that day brought to him and his family, urging senators not to dismiss the trial as inconsequential since Trump is no longer in office. At the close of the montage, he told the senators, "If that's not an impeachable offense, then there is no such thing."

Although agreeing that the violence at the Capitol was wrong,

Senate Republicans did not hesitate to express their opposite views on the constitutionality of the trial, as shown by this tweet from Fox News producer Jason Donner, referencing a video released by Sen. Kevin Cramer, ., who said this is “the stupidest week in the Senate”:

Sen. Cramer: “This is the beginning of the stupidest week in the hear 4 hours now today of debate on the constitutional question realizing that the last time we had this question posed in a different form of course 45 senators voted that it was unconstitutional.”

– Jason Donner (@jason_donner) February 9, 2021

And Trump lawyers returned to the argument stated in their pre-impeachment brief: Since Trump no longer holds office, the trial is unconstitutional, adding that the proceedings will “tear this country apart.” Lead attorney David Schoen made the point that “Presidents are impeachable because they are removable. Former presidents are not because they cannot be removed.”

Security remained extremely tight at the Capitol on Tuesday, the Associated Press reports. White House press secretary Jen Psaki previously said President Joe Biden does not intend to “spend much time” watching the trial.

For a summary of the impeachment process and how the week will play out at the Capitol, [click here](#). {eo}

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