

GOP-Led House Impeaches Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas—by One Vote—Over Border Management

The U.S. House voted Tuesday to impeach Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, with the Republican majority determined to punish the Biden administration over its handling of the border after failing last week in a politically embarrassing setback.

The evening roll call proved tight, with Speaker Mike Johnson's threadbare GOP majority unable to handle many defectors or absences in the face of staunch Democratic opposition to impeaching Mayorkas, the first Cabinet secretary charged in nearly 150 years.

In a historic rebuke, the House impeached Mayorkas 214-213. With the return of Majority Leader Steve Scalise to bolster the GOP's numbers after being away from Washington for cancer care and a Northeastern storm impacting some others, Republicans recouped—despite dissent from their own ranks.

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President Joe Biden called it a “blatant act of unconstitutional partisanship that has targeted an honorable public servant in order to play petty political games.”

The charges against Mayorkas next go to the Senate for a trial, but neither Democratic nor even some Republican senators have shown interest in the matter, and it may be indefinitely shelved to a committee. The Senate is expected to receive the articles of impeachment from the House after

returning to session Feb. 26.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., called the case against Mayorkas a “sham impeachment” and a “new low for House Republicans.”

In a frantic scene of vote-tallying on the House floor, the GOP effort to impeach Mayorkas over his handling of the southern border took on an air of political desperation as Republicans struggle to make good on their priorities.

Mayorkas faced two articles of impeachment filed by the Homeland Security Committee arguing that he “willfully and systematically” refused to enforce existing immigration laws and that he breached the public trust by lying to Congress and saying the border was secure.

But critics of the impeachment effort said the charges against Mayorkas amount to a policy dispute over Biden’s border strategy, hardly rising to the Constitution’s bar of high crimes and misdemeanors.

The House had initially launched an impeachment inquiry into Biden over his son’s business dealings, but instead turned its attention to Mayorkas after Georgia Republican Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, an ally of former President Donald Trump, pushed the debate forward following the panel’s months-long investigation.

Greene, who will serve as an impeachment manager in a potential Senate trial, hugged Scalise afterward and posed for photos with other lawmakers. She said senators “better pay attention to the American people and how they feel, and then they need to read our articles of impeachment.”

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Border security has shot to the top of campaign issues, with Trump, the Republican front-runner for the presidential nomination, insisting he will launch “the largest domestic deportation operation in American history” if he retakes the White House.

Various House Republicans have prepared legislation to begin deporting migrants who were temporarily allowed into the U.S. under the Biden administration’s policies, many as they await adjudication of asylum claims.

“We have no choice,” Trump said in stark language at a weekend rally in South Carolina.

At the same time, Johnson rejected a bipartisan Senate border security package Mayorkas had spent weeks negotiating. But the speaker has been unable to advance his Republicans’ own proposal, which is a nonstarter in the Senate.{eo}

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