

WASHINGTON, D.C. | CAPITOL BREACH

Pelosi moves cautiously against Trump

BY BILLY HOUSE

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is moving cautiously as she faces pressure from angry Democrats to impeach President Donald Trump for a second time, while President-elect Joe Biden is making it clear he wants to focus on his agenda and fighting the coronavirus.

With many House Democrats demanding impeachment after Trump encouraged a mob that stormed the Capitol on Wednesday, Pelosi said Friday that Democrats “will preserve every option” to force Trump from office unless he resigns immediately.

That could either be through the very unlikely prospect that Vice President Mike Pence invokes the 25th Amendment to declare the president incapable of governing or by impeachment in the House, which would require the Senate to act and convict Trump.

She also could just let the clock run out on Trump’s presidency. Another possibility — that Trump’s remaining advisers might simply convince him to resign — seems remote.

Pelosi said she’s instructed the House Rules Committee to be ready to move forward with an impeachment case, but she stopped short of saying that would be brought for a vote.

“With great respect, our deliberations will continue,” Pelosi said in a statement. If Democrats follow through, Trump would become the first American president to be impeached twice.

Transition to Biden

For Democratic leaders there’s little risk in pressuring Trump’s Cabinet and Pence, but impeachment would put the spotlight on Trump instead of on preparing for Biden’s incoming administration. It could also mean a Senate impeachment trial during the first days of Biden’s presidency, forcing the chamber to set aside other business, including confirming a new Cabinet.

Biden on Friday, when asked about impeaching Trump, said that was a judgment for Congress. But he also appeared to suggest tapping the brakes on such a politically fraught move when there’s just days until his



J. Scott Applewhite/AP

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., holds a news conference on the day after violent protesters loyal to President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol.

inauguration and he wants to begin tackling his agenda.

“It’s important we get on with the business getting him out of office. The quickest way that that will happen is us being sworn in on the 20th,” Biden said at a news conference in Wilmington, Delaware. “I am focused now on us taking control as president and vice president on the 20th, and to get our agenda moving as quickly as we can.”

Pelosi told House Democrats in a conference call early

Friday afternoon that she would be talking to Biden to get his view about how they should proceed, according to a person who listened to the call. A statement from the president-elect’s transition team later said Biden spoke to Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer but it made no mention of any discussion of what actions to take on Trump.

The text of the proposed impeachment resolution includes a single article accusing Trump of

“Incitement of Insurrection” and says he engaged in high crimes and misdemeanors by “willfully inciting violence against the government of the United States” in connection with the storming of the Capitol Wednesday by throngs of his supporters.

Any attempt to impeach Trump would be running up against the calendar as well as against divisions among Republicans over how to contain the president during his final days in office. The House would have just days to act before Biden’s inauguration, and it’s not clear that the Senate could move ahead with a trial within a week. Convicting Trump would require support from a significant number of GOP senators.

McConnell’s message about impeachment

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who has stayed mum on any next steps regarding Trump, sent a memo to GOP senators late Friday that outlines what the timetable would be for any impeachment trial. It said the Senate is in recess and it would require unanimous consent in the

Unease with Trump grows in the Senate

Lisa Murkowski of Alaska was the first GOP senator to urge the president to step down, telling the Anchorage Daily News that she questioned her future as a Republican if the party doesn’t break with the outgoing president.

“I want him to resign. I want him out,” Murkowski said in a Friday interview with the newspaper.

Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., told Fox News on Saturday that the president “committed impeachable offenses.”

Toomey has said he will retire from Congress in 2022.

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Nebr., has said he is open to considering impeachment proceedings.

chamber to act on any articles impeachment trial before Jan. 19. A trial would not begin until Trump’s term expired and then would require the Senate to remain in session daily until a verdict is rendered.

Where Bentz, Wyden, Schrader stand on Trump’s removal

Bulletin wire reports

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., called for a swift, last-minute removal of President Donald Trump in a news conference Saturday, days after the siege of the U.S. Capitol by a mob of Trump supporters.

“My view is Donald Trump is a clear and present danger,” Wyden said. “He is responsible for this week’s domestic terrorist attack on the people’s Capitol and he ought to be held



Wyden

to account.”

Wyden called for the president to be removed by either impeachment or use of the 25th amendment, which requires a majority of the president’s cabinet to declare him unfit for office.

U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader on Saturday added his voice to those calling for Trump to be removed.

Schrader, a Democrat representing the Salem area, part of the coastline and the southern Portland suburbs, said he will vote to impeach the president, calling Trump “a clear and present danger to our country.”

“While I have pushed other reme-



Schrader

diates for his criminal conduct, impeachment is the tool before us and warranted for his seditious acts,” Schrader said in a statement posted to social media Saturday.

Schrader’s statement comes the day after he apologized for comparing possible impeachment proceedings against Trump to a “lynching.” He made the comment on a call with other House Democrats, sources told ABC News. Schrader has faced blow-

back for his comment, including losing the support of a powerful political consultant group based in Portland.

Bentz: No impeachment, no resignation

Rep. Cliff Bentz, Oregon’s sole Republican member of Congress, said in an interview Saturday with the Malheur Enterprise that impeachment wouldn’t be a “productive exercise.” He also said Trump shouldn’t resign.

Bentz, the representative for much of Eastern and Central Oregon, took office a week ago and had joined the effort in Congress to overturn the presidential

election results.

Articles of impeachment could come Monday, and the House could vote on them by the middle of the week. House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer have called for the president’s removal, as well as other members from Oregon’s congressional delegation, including Sen. Jeff Merkley and Reps. Earl Blumenauer, Peter DeFazio and Suzanne Bonamici.



Bentz

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