

WHAT DIDN'T MATTER

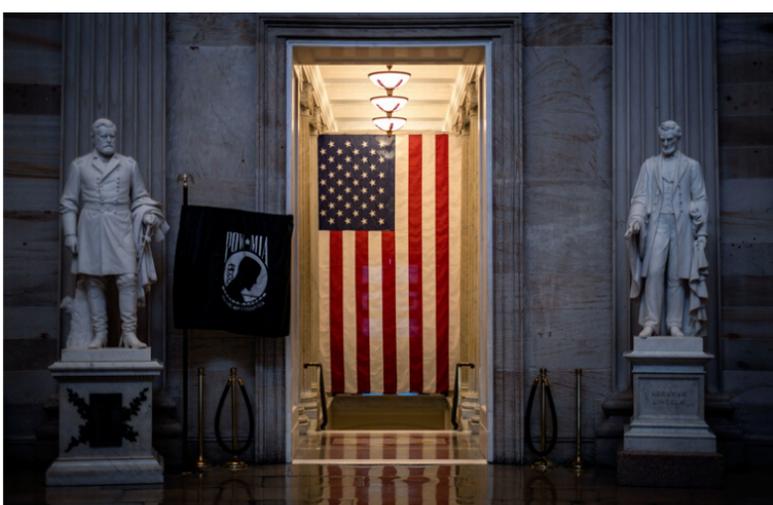


IT'S ALL OVER BUT THE GLOATING

That sound you hear is the drip, drip, drip of new information about President Trump's Ukraine scheme making their way through the leaky sieve of public discourse. We will get more and more information and yet will be able to do little or nothing with it.

Just hours after the Senate adjourned following the no-witness vote, [the DOJ released dozens of emails detailing Trump's involvement in withholding the Ukraine security assistance](#). They show he was directly involved in the decisions as early as June. Whaaat? The emails had been withheld from Congress and were ordered released by a federal court as part of a Freedom of Information Act suit.

Even though we won't get witnesses, which all but eliminates any chance of removal (we all know that was a hope aloft on gossamer wings, though, right?), the House evidence has been proved, the Trump defenders focused more on marketing the president's re-election than rebutting the charges and evidence. So surely he's tainted by this brush. Not so fast. [A new poll released on Sunday by the NBC/Wall St. Journal finds Trump's approval at an all-time high of 46 percent](#). Even though 52 percent of registered voters believe he "abused his power" and 53 percent believe he obstructed Congress, 48 percent say he should not be removed from office.



Who will bear the brunt of the backlash in the court of public opinion? [A well-sourced and scholarly \(but that doesn't mean don't read it\) piece in The New Yorker](#) suggests, that just might be the Senate's burden to bear.

Another NYer piece concludes that **"the Senate can stop pretending."** Well, not quite, the charade still has a few days to run with a final vote on Wednesday - **after** the State of the Union.

PROFILES IN COURAGE? OR NOT SO MUCH...

Democrats pinned their hopes for witnesses on four Republicans. Here's how each of the four explained their decision with links to stories in their home state papers.

Mitt Romney, voted to allow witnesses. A spokesperson said

"he wants to hear from Ambassador Bolton." After voting with the minority, Romney was disinvited from the conservative CPAC conference.

Susan Collins voted to allow witnesses and is disappointed in the failure of the vote. "I will now have to make a decision based on the record before me," she said. Nothing that "In the end, I have to do what I think is right. That has always been my approach to the job and always will be.



Lisa Murkowski voted against having witnesses for the seemingly inconsistent reason that "I have come to the conclusion that there will be no fair trial in the Senate." So, she chose to bring an end to the process because.. well what's the point? Courage, possibly.

Lamar Alexander said he believed the president had committed the crimes he was accused of and that the House had proven its case. But that the punishment was not appropriate and Trump's fate should be decided by the voters. A bit of a bizarre conclusion when his crimes spurred from his efforts to cheat to win re-election.

Every one of the 15 impeachment trials in US history had witnesses until this one. So what now? We have to do everything possible to change the dynamic. We want something different, we have to elect more Dems up and down the ballot. And we have to **work** to make that happen.