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The GOP Should Welcome More Impeachment Witnesses

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As this is being written, the question of whether the Senate will call in more witnesses to build on the testimonies given during the House's impeachment inquiry is center stage.

Democrats have been insistent that they want to bring in administration officials they were unable to hear from in the House, most prominently former National Security Adviser John Bolton and acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) cited new witness testimonies in the Senate trial as one of the chief motives behind her decision to hold the articles of impeachment from proceeding to the upper chamber for nearly a month. "We wanted the public to see the need for witnesses, witnesses with firsthand knowledge of what happened," Pelosi told *This Week*.

After spouting off a *Washington Post*/ABC News poll that claims 70 percent of Americans think the president should allow his top aides to testify, Pelosi added: "So, again, it's about a fair trial. And we think that would be with witnesses and documentation. So, that dynamic has — now the ball is in their court to either do that, or pay a price for not doing it."

Republicans, on the other hand, have long argued that the House has had its opportunity to conduct an investigation and it is now the domain of the Senate to merely try the facts and evidence presented by the lower chamber. "It's not the Senate's job to do the House's job," said Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), echoing the sentiments of many in his party.

The suspicion from the Right has been that Democrats, knowing that the case laid out in the House lacks any real teeth, essentially want to go on a fishing expedition in the Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) initially blasted the notion of calling witnesses, accusing Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) of looking "to make [House Intelligence Committee] Chairman Schiff's sloppy work more persuasive."

"The Senate is meant to act as judge and jury, to hear a trial, not to re-run the entire fact-finding investigation because angry partisans rushed sloppily through it," McConnell said on the Senate floor.

The Kentuckian isn't wrong about the opposition's intentions. Despite Democrats' rhetoric about the "somberness" surrounding the impeachment of the 45th American president and his supposed threat to our Republic, the actual articles of impeachment are lightweight — free of the high crimes or misdemeanors one would expect given the Constitution's stipulations for impeaching a president.

One article is for abuse of power and the other is for obstruction of Congress. Where's the bribery charge? After all, President Trump's alleged attempt to bribe Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky



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to investigate Hunter and Joe Biden is what started all this in the first place.

It's no surprise, then, that Democrats are so eager to hear from John Bolton, who claims in his new book that the president told him directly that he paused the famously withheld Ukrainian military aid to force the Biden investigation.

Bolton, a longtime neoconservative war hawk and Republican establishment insider, appears to be the savior pro-impeachment Democrats have been praying for.

They may get their wish. Bolton's story is juicy enough to give President Trump's familiar Republican critics grounds for siding with Democrats in a vote on witnesses.

Senator Mitt Romney (R-Utah) said it's "increasingly likely" for more Republicans to join the calls for Bolton's testimony following the accusations. Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) said Bolton's account will "strengthen the case" for witnesses. And Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) affirmed she's "still curious" about what Bolton can potentially tell the lawmakers. Democrats need at least four Republicans to join with them in order to bring in new witnesses.

Is it game over for Team Trump, then? On the contrary, this may be just what the doctor ordered.

The men and women who make up red America know the impeachment charges are bogus. And the senators who represent these men and women know they know it. While some lawmakers may grandstand about "fair trials" and "hearing the full story" right now, they're ultimately unwilling to commit political kamikaze on behalf of their Democratic friends. They will vote for the witnesses, but not to convict the president.

Rather than resist the new witnesses, President Trump's supporters — and truth seekers in general — should welcome the opportunity to do a witness exchange with Democrats. "You get John Bolton but we get to put Hunter Biden and his suspicious international business activities center stage," the Republicans should say.

The younger Biden has reportedly been prepping for the possibility of being called before the Senate. It would certainly be a shame to let all that preparation go to waste.

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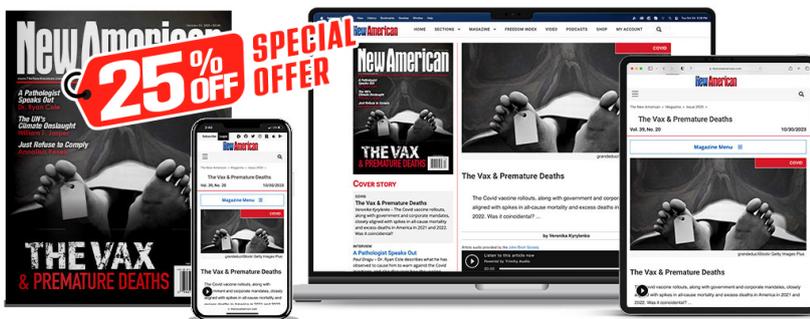
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