



U.S. Senator Steve Daines' Remarks As Prepared For Delivery on the Impeachment Trial of President Donald Trump

"I rise today in the very chamber where just three Presidential impeachment trials have been held over the course of our nation's history.

"President Johnson in 1868, President Clinton in 1999, and now President Trump.

"I sat in this very desk the past two weeks, listening to over 65 hours of trial proceedings.

"During that time, we heard from 13 witnesses, viewed 193 video clips, over 28,000 pages of documentation, and Senators asked over 180 questions.

"In the Senate, we took our solemn duty seriously and if there is one thing to be remembered from this trial, for generations to come—it is this:

"Sadly, over the course of our country's 244-year history, never has our nation faced such a partisan abuse of power.

"Never has the Senate been faced with articles of impeachment that allege no crimes, in the attempt to remove a duly elected President of the United States from office.

"Never before have we seen such a partisan presidential impeachment process.

"In 1974 when Nixon faced impeachment, 177 House Republicans joined Democrats in support of the impeachment inquiry.

"During Clinton's impeachment, 31 Democrats joined House Republicans.

"But with President Trump, there were zero. Not one Republican supported it.

"In fact, some Democrats opposed it. To be clear, there was bipartisan opposition.

"This impeachment is an unprecedented, purely partisan threat to the Constitution.

"Our Founding Fathers... the framers of our Constitution... they understood what the power of impeachment meant when they gave it to Congress.

“Alexander Hamilton and James Madison feared the Congressional abuse of power and legislative tyranny, as they debated whether to include the power of impeachment in the Constitution.

“The Founders knew the removal of a President from office amounted to a political death sentence.

“In Federalist 65, Hamilton warns the House could be “intemperate” and abuse their majority.

“He proclaimed the Senate would be the “unawed and uninfluenced...” the “independent” institution, to determine whether a House impeachment was warranted.

“The Founders had the wisdom to establish a two-thirds Senate vote threshold to help ensure that removal could not be achieved by mere partisan politics.

“The Founders established that this thermonuclear option of impeachment must be bipartisan to safeguard not just the President from unwarranted removal — but to protect the will of the American people who elected the President in the first place.

“Unfortunately, Nancy Pelosi, Adam Schiff and House Democrats have done exactly what the founding fathers feared.

“They’ve ignored what House Manager and Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Jerry Nadler himself correctly observed, during the 1998 Clinton impeachment, when he stated and I quote:

“‘There must never be a narrowly-voted impeachment or an impeachment substantially supported by one of our major political parties and largely opposed by the other. Such an impeachment would lack legitimacy.’

“Unfortunately, Nancy Pelosi’s House of Representatives discarded Nadler’s wise words and stubbornly defied historical precedent by rushing articles of impeachment, on a purely partisan vote to the U.S. Senate.

“The Democrat’s decision was a mistake that has only further divided our nation during a time we should be working together.

“It was wrong. And it has damaged our country.

“We should now fear for future Presidents, Democrats or Republicans, who will hold the oath of office in this newly hyper-partisan era.

“Importantly, for the first time in our nation’s history, the articles of this presidential impeachment passed by Nancy Pelosi’s House accuse President Trump of no crimes, let alone demonstrate that the President’s actions warranted removal from office.

“This partisan and weak case from the House Managers proves what this impeachment has always been about... partisan politics.

“This impeachment has been nothing more than an attempt to overturn the 2016 presidential election, and to severely impact the 2020 election – to literally remove President Trump from the 2020 ballot.

“The 2020 election is already underway – just yesterday Americans cast their votes in Iowa for President.

“In fact, last Friday, Montanans submitted signatures and filed the paperwork to place President Trump on the Montana ballot for the 2020 election.

“Sadly, it’s no surprise that we’re in this situation today.

“The Democrats have been obsessed with impeaching President Trump before he was even sworn into office.

“They could not accept that Donald Trump won the election in 2016.

“On December 15th, 2016, just five weeks following the 2016 presidential election, a headline from Vanity Fair read, and I quote:

“‘Democrats are paving the way to Impeach Donald Trump.’

“On January 20th, 2017, the day of President Trump’s inauguration, the Washington Post headline read, and I quote:

“‘The campaign to impeach President Trump has begun.’

“This article was posted just 19 minutes – 19 minutes – after President Trump was sworn into office.

“Ten days later, on January 30th 2017, the attorney for the whistleblower, the person that started this entire impeachment before us today, tweeted and I quote,

“‘Coups have started. First of many steps. Rebellion. Impeachment will follow ultimately.’

“We’ve even seen some House Democrats publicly state that the only way to beat President Trump in the next election is to impeach him.

“Our Founding Fathers would be grieved by the careless use of the most powerful tool against the Presidency.

“Impeachment is not a tool to overturn the results of a past election.

“It is not a tool to change the outcome of an upcoming election.

“In America, the power of our government doesn’t come from 100 senators or a handful of lawmakers.

“Our power is derived from the people whom we serve.

“This grand American experiment of our democratic republic is built upon the idea of a government of, by and for the people.

“Montanans elected me to represent them in the U.S. Senate. To be their voice in Washington, D.C.

“Montanans overwhelmingly oppose this impeachment. Montanans stand with President Trump.

“President Trump won Montana by over 20 points in the 2016 election.

“Supporting this impeachment means ignoring the voices of Montanans who voted for President Trump in the last election.

“And it means silencing Montanans who plan to vote for President Trump in the 2020 election.

“Never before has the U.S. Senate removed a President from office.

“And it’s not going to happen now.

“I am voting to acquit President Donald J. Trump.

“For the good of our country, let it be seared in our minds forevermore:

“Impeachment must never ever again be used as a partisan weapon.

“I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to fully understand the magnitude of what this would mean for our country.

“This is the first purely partisan impeachment. It must be our last.

“It should be up to the American people to decide who their next president is, not the U.S. Senate.

“The answer is an election, not an impeachment.

“I yield back.”

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