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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

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U.S. Senate acquits Trump as Republicans save him in impeachment again



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Senate acquitted Donald Trump on Saturday in his second impeachment trial in a year, with fellow Republicans blocking conviction over the former president's role in the deadly assault by his supporters on the U.S. Capitol.

The U.S. Senate votes to acquit former U.S. President Donald Trump by a vote of 57 guilty to 43 not guilty, short of the 2/3s majority needed to convict, during the fifth day of the impeachment trial of the former president on charges of inciting the deadly attack on the U.S. Capitol, on Capitol Hill in Washington, U.S., February 13, 2021. U.S. Senate TV/Handout via Reuters

The Senate vote of 57-43 fell short of the two-thirds majority needed to convict Trump on a charge of incitement of insurrection after a five-day trial in the same building ransacked by his followers on Jan. 6 shortly after they heard him deliver an incendiary speech.

In the vote, seven of the 50 Senate Republicans joined the chamber's unified Democrats in favoring conviction.

Acquittal by the numbers

How the Senate voted

Trump left office on Jan. 20, so impeachment could not be used to remove him from power. But Democrats had hoped to secure a conviction to hold him responsible for a siege that left five people including a police officer dead and to set the stage for a vote to bar him from ever serving in public office again. Given the chance to hold office in the future, they argued, Trump would not hesitate to encourage political violence again.

Trump's attorneys argued that his words at the rally were protected by his constitutional right to free speech and said he was not given due process in the proceedings.

Republicans saved Trump in the Feb. 5, 2020, vote in his first impeachment trial, when only one senator from their ranks - Mitt Romney - voted to convict and remove him from office.

Romney voted for impeachment on Saturday along with fellow Republicans Richard Burr, Bill Cassidy, Susan Collins, Ben Sasse, Pat Toomey, and Lisa Murkowski.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who voted "not guilty," offered scathing remarks about the former president after the verdict.

"There is no question that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of the day," he said. "The people who stormed this building believed they were acting on the wishes and instructions of their president."

The drama on the Senate floor unfolded against a backdrop of gaping divisions in a pandemic-weary United States along political, racial, socioeconomic and regional lines. The trial provided more partisan warfare even as Democratic President Joe Biden, who took office on Jan. 20 after defeating Trump in the November election, called for healing and unity after his predecessor's four turbulent years in power and a caustic election campaign.

RELATED COVERAGE

Factbox: Seven Republicans vote to convict Trump in impeachment trial

After not-guilty vote, McConnell says Trump 'morally responsible' for Capitol riot

Seventy-one percent of American adults, including nearly half of all Republicans, believe Trump was at least partially responsible for starting the Capitol assault, but only about half of the country thought Trump should be convicted of inciting insurrection, according to

an Ipsos poll conducted for Reuters.

Trump, 74, continues to hold a grip on his party with a right-wing populist appeal and "America First" message. The wealthy businessman-turned-politician has considered running for president again in 2024.

Trump is only the third president ever to be impeached by the House of Representatives - a step akin to a criminal indictment - as well as the first to be impeached twice and the first to face an impeachment trial after leaving office. But the Senate still has never convicted an impeached president.

Democrats forged ahead with impeachment despite knowing it could overshadow critical early weeks of Biden's presidency.

The House approved the single article of impeachment against Trump on Jan. 13, with 10 Republicans joining the chamber's Democratic majority. That vote came a week after the pro-Trump mob stormed the neoclassical domed Capitol, interrupted the formal congressional certification of Biden's victory, clashed with an overwhelmed police force, invaded the hallowed House and Senate chambers, and sent lawmakers into hiding for their own safety.

'FIGHT LIKE HELL'

Shortly before the rampage, Trump urged his followers to march on the Capitol, repeated his false claims that the election was stolen from him through widespread voting fraud, and told them that "if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore."

During the trial, nine House lawmakers serving as trial managers, or prosecutors, urged senators to convict Trump to hold him accountable for a crime against American democracy and to prevent a repeat in the future. They played searing video of rioters swarming inside the Capitol and making violent threats toward politicians including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and then-Vice President Mike Pence. The House managers said Trump summoned the mob to Washington, gave the crowd its marching orders and then did nothing to stop the ensuing violence.

The defense lawyers accused Democrats not only of trying to silence Trump as a political opponent they feared facing in the future but of attempting to criminalize political speech with which they disagreed and aiming to cancel the voices of the tens of millions of voters who backed him.

Trump's lawyers argued the trial was unconstitutional because he had already left office. The words Trump used, they argued, were no different than those regularly employed by Democrats. In his previous impeachment trial, the Senate voted to acquit Trump on two charges - abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. That impeachment arose from Trump's 2019 pressure on Ukraine to investigate Biden as he sought foreign aid to sully a domestic political rival.

A common theme in the charges at the heart of the two impeachments was Trump's abandonment of accepted democratic norms to advance his own political interests.



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Music Brings The Peace

This is the first time we have sponsored the 25th Annual Texas International Lunar Festival on the internet and social media. Many people around the world were able to watch our program through YouTube, Facebook and many other social media platforms.



Advertisement for the 25th Annual Texas International Lunar Festival, featuring a red bull, cultural dances, and a virtual watch option. Includes logos for STV and Southern News Group.

The almost two and one-half hours show included a lot of local and world famous musicians and performers who displayed their talents to the millions in the audience who greatly enjoyed their performances.

personally to congratulate me on the program and wished me a Happy Lunar New Year. Congressman Al Green also sent a message to our community.

We really appreciate the contributions of our producer Gao Xiao Huey, artist Lucy Tung, Chen Lan-Hung and Wang Lian. Their world-class program made our show so successful.

2020 was a year full of so much tragedy. Many of us lost businesses and family members. Even now we are still fighting for survival. We are so glad the new administration is working so hard to fight the coronavirus. We are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel now.

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner also sent us a video message and called me



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New COVID-19 Variants Raise Concerns About Virus Reinfections



A 2020 electron microscope image made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows SARS-CoV-2 virus particles which cause COVID-19. According to research released in 2021, evidence is mounting that having COVID-19 may not protect against getting infected again with some of the new variants.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Evidence is mounting that having COVID-19 may not protect against getting infected again with some of the new variants. People also can get second infections with earlier versions of the coronavirus if they mounted a weak defense the first time, new research suggests.

How long immunity lasts from natural infection is one of the big questions in the pandemic. Scientists still think reinfections are fairly rare and usually less serious than initial ones, but recent developments around the world have raised concerns.

In South Africa, a vaccine study found new infections with a variant in 2% of people who previously had an earlier version of the virus. In Brazil, several similar cases were documented with a new variant there. Researchers are exploring whether reinfections help explain a recent surge in the city of Manaus, where three-fourths of residents were thought to have been previously infected.

In the United States, a study found that 10% of Marine recruits who had evidence of prior infection and repeatedly tested negative before starting basic training were later infected again. That work was done before the new variants began to spread, said one study leader, Dr. Stuart Sealton of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York.

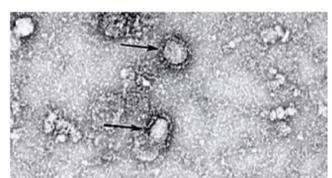


“Previous infection does not give you a

free pass,” he said. “A substantial risk of reinfection remains.”

Reinfections pose a public health concern, not just a personal one. Even in cases where reinfection causes no symptoms or just mild ones, people might still spread the virus. That’s why health officials are urging vaccination as a longer-term solution and encouraging people to wear masks, keep physical distance and wash their hands frequently.

“It’s an incentive to do what we have been saying all along: to vaccinate as many people as we can and to do so as quickly as we can,” said Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government’s top infectious disease expert. “My looking at the data suggests ... and I want to underline suggests ... the protection induced by a vaccine may even be a little better” than natural infection, Fauci said.



Doctors in South Africa began to worry when they saw a surge of cases late last year in areas where blood tests suggested many people had already had the virus. Until recently, all indications were “that previous infection confers protection for at least nine months,” so a second wave should have been “relatively subdued,” said Dr. Shabir Madhi of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Scientists discovered a new version of the virus that’s more contagious and less susceptible to certain treatments. It now causes more than 90% of new cases in South Africa and has spread to 40 countries including the United States. Madhi led a study testing Novavax’s vaccine and found it less effective against the new variant. The study also revealed that infections with the new variant were just as common among people who had COVID-19 as those who had not.

“What this basically tells us, unfortunately, is that past infection with early variants of the virus in South Africa

does not protect” against the new one, he said. In Brazil, a spike in hospitalizations in Manaus in January caused similar worry and revealed a new variant that’s also more contagious and less vulnerable to some treatments.



“Reinfection could be one of the drivers of these cases,” said Dr. Ester Sabino of the University of Sao Paulo. She wrote an article in the journal Lancet on possible explanations. “We have not yet been able to define how frequently this is happening,” she said. California scientists also are investigating whether a recently identified variant may be causing reinfections or a surge of cases there.

“We’re looking at that now,” seeking blood samples from past cases, said Jasmine Plummer, a researcher at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

Dr. Howard Bauchner, editor-in-chief of the Journal of the American Medical Association, said it soon would report on what he called “the Los Angeles variant.”

A study by the Naval Medical Research Center involved several thousand Marine recruits who tested negative for the virus three times during a two-week supervised military quarantine before starting basic training. Among the 189 whose blood tests indicated they had been infected in the past, 19 tested positive again during the six weeks of training. That’s far less than those without previous infection — “almost half of them became infected at the basic training site,” Sealton said.



Evidence is mounting that having

COVID-19 before may not protect against getting infected again with some of the new variants emerging around the world. (Feb. 8)

The amount and quality of antibodies that previously infected Marines had upon arrival was tied to their risk of getting the virus again. No reinfections caused serious illness, but that does not mean the recruits were not at risk of spreading infection to others, Sealton said.

“It does look like reinfection is possible. I don’t think we fully understand why that is and why immunity has not developed” in those cases, said an immunology expert with no role in the study, E. John Wherry of the University of Pennsylvania.

“Natural infections can leave you with a range of immunity” while vaccines consistently induce high levels of antibodies, Wherry said. “I am optimistic that our vaccines are doing a little bit better.” (Courtesy apnews.com)



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Editor's Choice



Tampa Bay Buccaneers' Tom Brady and his family celebrate after his team beat the Kansas City Chiefs to win the Super Bowl LV in Tampa, Florida, February 7, 2021. Brady threw three touchdowns as the Buccaneers thumped the Chiefs 31-9, giving the 43-year-old quarterback a record-extending seventh championship ring. REUTERS/Eve Edelheit



Police fire a water cannon at protesters rallying against the military coup and to demand the release of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi in Naypyitaw, Myanmar, February 9, 2021. The coup has prompted the biggest demonstrations since a 2007 'Saffron Revolution' that ultimately became a step towards now halted democratic change. REUTERS/Stringer



Members of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) tend to people rescued after a Himalayan glacier burst and swept away a small hydroelectric dam in Chormi village in Tapovan, Uttarakhand state, India, February 7, 2021. At least 36 people have died and at least 170 remain missing after an avalanche that tore through dams and swept away bridges in the river valley. REU-



A nurse monitors the vital signs of a newborn baby with COVID-19, lying in an incubator, at the coronavirus neonatal unit of the Maternal Perinatal Hospital 'Monica Pretelini Saenz' in Toluca, Mexico, February 4, 2021. REUTERS/Luis Cortes



A butterfly lands on the hand of Rafael Nadal during his first round match against Laslo Djere at the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia, February 9, 2021. REUTERS/Loren Elliott



The Kraken house float, on Memphis Street in Lakeview, is one of thousands in the New Orleans area decorated in celebration of Mardi Gras in Louisiana, February 7, 2021. Residents have been encouraged to view the homes while practicing social distancing. REUTERS/Kathleen

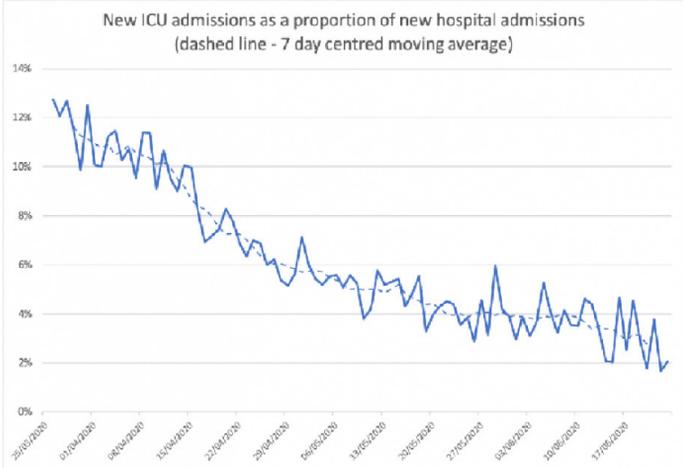


Students from Dagon University take part in a demonstration against the military coup in Yangon, Myanmar, February 5, 2021. REUTERS/Stringer



Disabled dogs in mobility aids run during a daily walk at The Man That Rescues Dogs Foundation in Chonburi, Thailand, January 26, 2021. The future of the shelter, started by a Swede who moved to Chonburi and dismayed by the poor condition of strays, is in doubt as the pandemic led to a 40% drop in donations and slashed the

Texas New COVID-19 Hospital Cases Declining



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

DALLAS - The number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 in Texas fell again Sunday after dipping below 10,000 for the first time since December on Saturday. There were 9,652 people in Texas hospitals with confirmed cases of the disease caused by the novel coronavirus Sunday, according to the Department of State Health Services. That's the lowest figure recorded since Dec. 16. State health officials reported 5,278 new, confirmed cases of the virus Sunday, 1,499 probable cases and 167 more fatalities. Texas has reported 38,643 COVID-19 deaths and more than 2.16 million cases since the pandemic began. The actual number of cases is believed to be far higher because many people haven't been tested and some who get sick don't show symptoms.



This scanning electron microscope im-

age shows SARS-CoV-2 (orange) — also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus that causes COVID-19. (National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases-Rocky Mountain Laboratories, NIH)

Over the past week, more than 16% of COVID-19 tests in Texas have come back positive, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms that clear up within weeks. But for others, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, the virus can cause severe illness and be fatal. (Courtesy https://www.fox26houston.com/)

Related

Biden Administration to Ship Covid Vaccine to Community Health Centers

The Biden administration will boost the number of Covid-19 vaccines distributed to states next week to 11 million doses and begin allocating a portion of the weekly shipments directly to community health centers, officials said Tuesday.

The move is meant to help state and local governments more equitably distribute the coronavirus vaccine to underserved or rural communities, said White House Covid-19 response coordinator Jeff Zients. Last week, states received 10.5 million doses.

At least one federally qualified community health center in each state will begin receiving allocations of the vaccine next week, and the goal for the initial phase of the project is to distribute 1 million vaccines to 250 centers, said Marcella Nunez-Smith, the head of the administration's Health Equity Task Force.



The centers serve about 30 million people across the country and about two-thirds of their patients live at or below the federal poverty line.

"This effort that focuses on direct allocation to the community health centers really is about connecting with those hard-to-reach populations across the country," said Nunez-Smith, noting that center patients include homeless individuals, public housing residents, and migrant workers.

The White House has sought to increase the number of vaccines shipped to states each week, from 8.6 million doses during President Biden's first week in office to 11 million doses next week.

In addition to setting aside allotments of vaccine for community health centers, the federal government will also set aside 1 million doses of vaccine for pharmacies participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program—a previously announced public-private partnership with 21 national pharmacy chains.

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