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Nixon strength fades

By David Murray
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WASHINGTON — If President Nixon ignores a House Judiciary Committee subpoena to turn over tapes and other materials, at least 30 of 38 committee members would now vote to recommend his impeachment, a Chicago Sun-Times congressional survey reveals.

Indeed, the survey showed, Nixon can count on only two or three sure votes on the committee, which is made up of 21 Democrats and 17 Republicans.

Since the outset of the impeachment proceedings, the Sun-Times Washington Bureau has conducted periodic soundings of Capitol Hill sentiment for and against impeachment.

The survey in the wake of

the issuance a week ago Thursday of the subpoena for materials relating to some 42 presidential conversations on the White House Watergate cover-up also showed that if such a lopsided margin persists among committee members, Nixon would be in severe danger of impeachment by the full House by a margin of nearly two to one.

Tradition in the House of Representatives is to support the recommendations of major committees, and a solid vote by Republicans on the judiciary Committee could well translate itself into a stunning pro-impeachment vote in the House, the survey shows.

On the committee, Nixon can count at this time on only two sure Republican votes, those of Rep. Edward Hutchinson of Michigan, the committee's ranking GOP

member, and Rep. Delbert Latta of Ohio, who was placed on the committee after the impeachment inquiry began because of his support of the President.

The survey also showed that Nixon can probably count on the support of a third Republican, Rep. Trent Lott as "probable anti-impeachment," rather than "definite anti-impeachment."

When a similar survey was taken in February, 12 of the 17 Republicans were listed as solidly against impeachment. But the issue of Nixon's refusal to turn over the tapes, along with developments such as his income-tax troubles, have probably cost him the support of at least five of those who formerly supported him.

Privately, according to the

on house panel

survey, these five GOP committee members are believed ready to vote for impeachment unless the President exonerates himself by releasing the tapes and cooperating further with the committee:

Harold Froelich (Wis.), Lawrence Hogan (Md.), Robert McClory (Ill.), Carlos Moorhead (Calif.) and Charles Wiggins (Calif.).

Republicans now reported by the survey to be leaning toward a recommendation for impeachment if further evidence is produced of Nixon's complicity in obstruction of justice, the gifts from ITT and the milk producers, are Reps. David Dennis (Ind.), Joseph Maraziti (N.J.), Wiley Mayne (Iowa) and Charles Sandman (N.J.).

All 21 Democrats are re-

ported ready to recommend impeachment if the materials are not produced. They include three Democrats who in February were shown as opposed to impeachment. The three — all Southerners — are Reps. Walter Flowers (Ala.), James Mann (S.C.) and Ray Thornton (Ark.).

Five GOP members previously rated as "swing" votes who were ready to be persuaded are shown in the survey to have lost patience with the White House and are prepared to recommend impeachment unless the President hands over exculpatory evidence.

These "swing" members are: M. Caldwell Butler (Va.), William Cohen (Me.), Hamilton Fish Jr. (N.Y.), Tom Railsback (Ill.) and Henry Smith (N.Y.).