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The People Who Want to Impeach

Washington

"What I am curious about," said Republican National Committee Chairman George Bush last week, "is knowing more about the impeachment lobby and how it is being financed. How about a little more investigative reporting on this one?"

Bush, Vice President Gerald Ford and Pennsylvania Republican Senator Hugh Scott have suggested that what they dub the "impeachment lobby" is small, elitist, radical and well financed.

While firm figures are hard to come by, a survey by UPI correspondents across the nation shows that the impeachment effort is not small, not elitist, not radical and, as of this writing, not particularly well financed — although its proponents say they are making financial progress.

There are powerful, established organizations backing impeachment, among them the AFL-CIO and the American Civil Liberties Union.

But there's also Marlene Barrett, a St. Louis mother of four, who has collected 2500 signatures on impeachment petitions in the last month. The petitions have been forwarded to the House Judiciary Committee.

The impeachment campaign is one of housewives, doctors, professors, union members, lawyers, Demo-

crats, Republicans — mostly middle-aged middle-of-the-roaders.

There are almost no students.

While virtually all the impeachment groups refused to give UPI lists of contributors, most said the bulk of individual donations were under \$20. Only one group said it had received even one check for \$1000.

As of January 22, the House Judiciary Committee had received 288,853 letters for impeachment and 42,916 against. That does not include 50,000 signatures on pro-impeachment petitions delivered last week by the National Emergency Civil Liberties union, not connected with the ACLU.

No one has kept count of the deluge of letters, telegrams and petitions received by individual members of Congress.

According to the UPI survey, the major, organized impeachment efforts are being conducted by:

- The 245,000-member ACLU, which has pegged this year's membership drive to the impeachment campaign.

- The AFL-CIO, which adopted a resolution October 22 calling for Mr. Nixon's resignation or impeachment.

- The National Committee on the Presidency, whose founding members include Professor James MacGregor Burns and historian Barbara Tuchman. Last

week the committee began a mail campaign that will reach six million persons in the next month.

- The National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, organized in 1951. This committee has collected 50,000 signatures on petitions asking that Mr. Nixon be impeached for his "unlawful bombing of Cambodia, (the) San Clemente business and violating the constitution."

The National Campaign to Impeach Nixon is an umbrella organization based largely in New York and Washington. It plans — among other activities — a week of "sustained lobbying" in Washington from today through Saturday, a "day of truth" on February 18 (the legal holiday celebrating Washington's birthday) and a mass demonstration in Washington in April or early May to "make it perfectly clear" that Mr. Nixon must be impeached.

What kind of people have contributed time or money to the impeachment campaign?

The Washington Area Impeachment Coalition says there have been 30 to 35 walk-in volunteers, including a white-haired old woman who said, "I'll do anything." She stuffed envelopes all day.

Lauren Selden, executive director of the ACLU in the state of Washington, said contributors and new members cut across party lines. Most newcomers are in their 50s, 60s and 70s. "They are people who have never done this kind of volunteer work before," Selden said.

Most members of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee — which has collected 50,000 signatures on impeachment petitions — are lawyers, doctors, professors and other professionals.

"Fair amounts of Republi-

cans and Democrats, professionals, housewives, more middle-aged and mid-American than you'd expect, hardly any students," said Sara Lee Evans, coordinator of the New York Civil Liberties Union's impeachment effort.

Blanche Cooper, who heads "We the People," an independent impeachment group in Louisville, Ky., noted "a number of housewives and professional people, but not many students."

"The least active are the young folk who in the past were in the forefront," said Selden. "They've grown up very cynical. I think it's because they have come to expect the worst in American politics. The older people who have been around for a while — Nixon has truly offended their political and moral sensitivities."

Impeachment is not a blue- or white-collar issue. Among New Yorkers supporting impeachment are, for example, the United Federation of Teachers (with 200,000 members in New York state), leather and fur workers, drug and hospital workers and persons in the hotel and motel trades.

Most of them simply reprint statements from the AFL-CIO in their own newsletters.

Emphasizing grass-roots support for impeachment, the chairman of the National Committee on the Presidency said its test mail campaign has shown that for every \$1 an impeachment group spends, it can collect 3 to \$5.

"Ordinarily," said Charles L. Mee Jr., "the number of people who contribute to political causes — left, right, and center — is limited to a few hundred thousand. We have moved off that center."

Mee said his committee is getting money from people on general consumer mailing lists, as opposed to those lists one would expect to be liberal — subscribers to the New Republic, for example.

"On this issue," said Mee, "We can go to a list of shoppers at the local A&P and get \$3 to \$5 for every \$1 we spend."

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