

Conservatives

The Erosion of Nixon's Right

Washington

New signs of erosion in President Nixon's efforts to forestall impeachment appeared yesterday among the conservatives who up to now have constituted the bedrock of his support.

Howard Phillips, the President's former director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, announced the formation of a new group known as Conservatives for the Removal of the President, which has as its aim the building of impeachment support among conservative constituencies.

And Representative John Ashbrook (Rep-Ohio) said that he is now prepared to vote for impeachment and that it would take "a miracle of evidence to change my mind."

Ashbrook, who opposed Mr. Nixon for the GOP nomination in 1972, had earlier called for his resignation. But up to now he opposed impeachment and described it as an alternative unpalatable for conservatives.

A number of other conservative GOP members in the House who up until a few weeks ago had been considered certain anti-impeachment votes also emerged in the undecided column.

These include Ben Blackburn of Georgia, Robert Baumann of Maryland, John Rousset of California and Lamar Baker of Tennessee.

The announcement by Phillips that he will form Conservatives for the Removal of the President — which he calls "CREEP 2" because it has the same initials as the Committee to Re-Elect the President — is seen as likely to generate more support in favor of impeachment.

"Nixon will fall when conservative constituencies



HOWARD PHILLIPS
He calls it 'CREEP 2'

make it possible for conservative legislators to vote for his impeachment," Phillips said.

A mailing sent out by Phillips contends that Mr. Nixon is pursuing a "survival strategy" in which all principled decisions on issues had been sacrificed.

"The President responds to the pressures of the moment, often without respect to source or merit," the letter said. "Thus on land use, conservative pressures were greatest and Nixon yielded to them. On legal services, he caved in to threats from the left."

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