

WXPost JUL 30 1974
**Gaps Open in Nixon Support
Among House Southerners**

By Mary Russell
and David S. Broder
Washington Post Staff Writers

Important gaps opened yesterday in Southern support for President Nixon's effort to beat impeachment in the House of Representatives.

A survey of key representatives from that region indicated that fewer than half the 74 Southern Democrats in the House may vote with the President.

Meantime, a telephone check of Midwest Republican leaders—another base of Mr. Nixon's strength in the House—indicated there may no longer be any clear advantage for Republican congressmen from that re-

gion in voting with the President.

With most Northern Democrats expected to favor impeachment, Mr. Nixon's chances of escaping a Senate trial lie in losing no more than 40 of the other 261 House members—187 of them Republicans and 74 Southern Democrats.

Rep. L. Richardson Preyer (D-N.C.), one of the more influential of the uncommitted Southerners, said yesterday that the Judiciary Committee staff and members "have done a very careful job of fitting the pieces together."

Referring to the pro-impeachment votes of Judiciary Committee members James R. Mann (D-S.C.) and

Walter Flowers (D-Ala.)

Preyer said, "when people like Mann and Flowers come out for impeachment, it will make it easier for other members from my area who might be inclined to support impeachment. Everyone knows they aren't secret liberals."

Preyer, who said the televised Judiciary Committee hearings have allowed members to "argue the case with constituents . . . overnight and reach people we couldn't reach if we worked all year at it," predicted pro-impeachment votes out of the Georgia, North Carolina

See **POLITICS, A14, Col. 1**

The President's support among conservatives shows signs of erosion. Page A14

POLITICS, From A1

and South Carolina delegations.

Rep. Gillis Long (D-La.), also uncommitted, said votes against the President would likely come from his state, from Georgia, and "possibly even one from Mississippi."

Long said the conduct of the Judiciary Committee had been "exemplary" and "tends to shore up the confidence of people that the matter's being handled fairly."

The President did pick up a formal pledge of support from one of his staunchest

Dixie backers, Rep. G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery (D-Miss.), who said he found "the evidence is not that strong."

Among the key uncommitted Midwest Republicans, Rep. John Erlenborn (R-Ill.) said he wanted "to take a close look at the criminal

charges," perhaps even listening to the tapes himself.

The shifting sands of Midwest Republicanism were indicated by R. L. (Dick) Herman, the Nebraska GOP national committeeman.

Although Sen. Carl Curtis (R-Neb.) has been among the President's most vocal defenders, Herman said "it's going to be extremely hard for any member" of Nebraska's all-Republican congressional delegation "to cast a vote either way. They're not only voting on the President, they're voting on their own political integrity. It's a tough, tough decision for all of them."

Herman said the impact of the televised hearings was "not good from the President's standpoint and was not good for politics. People want the whole thing over," he said. "They want it done with."

In Ohio, with 15 Republican representatives, state GOP chairman Kent B. McGough said, "There is no political hay to be made either way they go, and, in general, our surveys show, there's no vote that's free from danger."

The two Ohio members of the Judiciary Committee are split, with Democrat John F. Seiberling supporting impeachment and Republican

Delbert L. Latta opposing it.

McGough, too, commented that "people are so fed up with the thing that I'd have to say the televised hearings didn't have near the impact, for or against the President, I'd thought they would."

"I don't think the average person saw quite as strong a case against the President as he might have expected," he said, "but it's very disturbing to anyone who's thinking at all."

In Wisconsin, whose two Judiciary Committee members, Democrat Robert W. Kastenmeier and Republican Harold V. Froelich, both support impeachment, Republican National Committeeman Ody J. Fish said, "It's very difficult to assess politically which is the wiser course" for the state's four Republican representatives. "The wisest course is probably for them to search their conscience and do what they have to do."

Fish noted that in the hearings "the support for the President was based on a legalistic argument as to whether these are impeachable offenses, rather than whether things occurred that should or should not have happened. I think the majority of people in Wisconsin believe the entire sequence of events to have been a rather shabby stewardship of the office of the President."