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3 Survive Pro-Impeachment

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Reps. Walter Flowers, Thomas F. Railsback and James R. Mann, voted to recommend the impeachment of Richard Nixon. They share a few other traits:

Each comes from a district that voted heavily for Richard Nixon in the last presidential election.

Each represents a region with conservative-to-moderate politics, often more conservative than moderate.

Each has accumulated a voting record in Congress that generally reflects the views of their constituents and, not by coincidence, the views of Richard Nixon.

And each stands for reelection this November.

The impeachment votes of Flowers (D-Ala.), Railsback (R-Ill.) and Mann (D-S.C.) clearly were a difficult decision.

But in reports from each of the three districts, it appears that only Flowers may have suffered significant political damage. In the home territory of Railsback and Mann the initial response appeared temperate.

While Flowers suffered by far the worst home criticism, he is also unopposed in his November bid for re-election. He said he believes his political career can survive the impeachment vote—which he called the “worst political maneuver anyone can make in Alabama.”

In 1968, Flowers' Seventh District gave George Wallace 61 per cent of its presidential vote. In 1972 it went for Nixon by a 2-to-1 margin. While his district is by no means the President's strongest bastion in Alabama, it remains firmly conservative—a pattern that until now was clearly mirrored in Flowers' voting record.

In 1972, the 41-year old third term congressman reflected the views of both his constituents and the President by voting against federally funded school busing, against a large cut in defense spending, against a move to prohibit the use of funds to support military

operations in Cambodia, and for voluntary prayer in public schools. The Americans for Democratic Action gave him a lowly 6 rating on its legislative scale of 100.

But his impeachment vote may make District Seven voters forget much of that. “Disgusting,” said Mayor Clarence Hinton of Tuscaloosa, the largest town in the district.

According to one observer, the message of Flowers' conservative constituents had been harsh and clear: “Be objective, listen to evidence—then do not vote for impeachment.” An aide in Flowers' Washington office said responses have been running 65 per cent in favor of President Nixon.

Hilliard Fletcher, one of three Tuscaloosa commissioners, said about three-fourths of the people he has talked to believe there has not been enough evidence uncovered to warrant impeachment.

Whatever support Flowers may pick up from his impeachment stand will probably be among the large black population in his district—about 40 per cent and among some labor union members and students and faculty associated with the University of Alabama.

But the core of his support has been solidly conservative, ever since the

days in 1968 when he was one of a team of lawyers working to clear the legal path for George Wallace's bids to win a placeon state election ballots.

In the more moderate country along the upper-Illinois banks of the Mississippi River, Republican Party officials said Tom Railsback probably won some votes in taking his pro-impeachment stand. But at the same time, they said, his impeachment vote may cost him financial support of some traditional party contributors.

Rick Court, a district aide, said area response was about 6 to 4 favorable to Railsback's emotion-charged speech expressing “deep concern” for alleged presidential wrongdoing.

But Court estimated about 10 per cent of the responses were threats “from the diehard core of the Republican Party,” warning that a vote for impeachment would end forever their support for Railsback. Disapproving responses picked up somewhat after the first impeachment vote Saturday night.

Jean Arndt, chairman of the Rock Island County GOP, said this hard core represents a sizable majority of Railsback's traditional financial backers. But she hoped they could be returned to Railsback's camp by November, even if it costs him financial support in the meantime.

Tuesday, July 30, 1974 A 11

Votes

While the district is fairly balanced between Republican and Democratic counties it went solidly Nixon in both per cent of the vote, then with 62 per cent, the district is described by one observer as “moderately conservative,” and Railsback's eight-year voting record reflects that pattern—both liberal and conservative groups rate his legislative votes below ideal but above distressing.

James Gende, a Democrat who will oppose Railsback in November, said the Republican's pro-impeachment vote was the result of “personal political considerations.”

But Gende's campaign, which started with charges that Railsback was supporting the President, was apparently undercut in the end. “Gende can't even begin to compete unless Railsback votes against impeachment,” a prominent local Democrat confided before the Saturday vote.

In South Carolina's Fourth District, James Mann re-

ceived strong support from many constituents and Democratic officials. One Greenville, S.C., radio station conducted a running program on the issue, with Mann receiving overwhelmingly favorable comments from listeners. Words like “honest,” “responsible,” “fair,” and “brave” were among the comments.

Donald Fowler, state Democratic chairman, applauded Mann for “carrying out (his) constitutionally imposed duty.”

But Jesse Cooksey, South Carolina Republican chairman, said “the whole (Judiciary Committee) crowd should go to jail. This is the worst thing that has ever happened to this coun-

try and they should be impeached, not the President.”

Most Democrats rallied around the usually conservative third-term congressman, who in 1972 received an ADA legislative rating of zero.

This article is based on reports from correspondents Lon Huffman, David C. Elbert and B. J. Richey.