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 This Friday, the program will deal with sports law.

NATION

Page 8 • Thursday, February 4, 1999

Democrats promise battle GOP's proposal for formal finding of wrongdoing sparks criticism from democratic senators, Clinton supporters

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats threatened on Wednesday to turn President Clinton's impeachment trial into a party battle if the Republicans go through with plans to vote on a declaration of wrongdoing before deciding his fate.



CLINTON

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"If Republicans persist in demanding live witnesses and demanding more depositions and demanding extra legal devices like findings of fact, the more it becomes a Republican trial," Daschle told reporters. The White House also renewed its objections to the proposal, at the same time spokesperson Joe Lockhart pledged a restrained response if — as expected — Clinton is acquitted on the two articles of impeachment.

"I now declare in a post-impeachment era, this is a gloat-free zone," he said. Republican senators met privately late in the day, pondering their next moves in the trial, which is scheduled to resume Thursday.

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main under seal for a limited period of time.

For their part, House prosecutors met to weigh the results of the three depositions.

They said an attempt would be made to have witnesses testify in the Senate in person.

But GOP aides conceded it would be difficult to secure enough votes to prevail on that issue, particularly with public opinion in favor of a swift end to the proceedings.

The Democratic maneuvering came as Sidney Blumenthal, a White House aide, was questioned in a heavily secured room in the upper reaches of the Capitol.

A source familiar with the deposition, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Blumenthal repeated the testimony he had given a grand jury last year concerning a conversation he had had with Clinton about the president's relationship with Lewinsky.

The president lied to him, Blumenthal said.

Presidential friend Vernon Jordan and Lewinsky submitted to depositions earlier in the week as prosecutors probed for information that could buttress their case against the president.

White House lawyers also attended the depositions but gave no indication they heard any revelations that caused them alarm.

Clinton is accused of perjury and obstruction of justice for attempting to conceal his sexual relationship with Lewinsky.

Republicans have been working in recent days on a "finding of fact" that would formally declare that Clinton had "willfully provided false and misleading testimony" to Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's grand jury.

The draft document also alleges the president engaged in a course of conduct designed to "alter, delay, impede, cover up and conceal the existence of evidence and testimony" in the sexual harassment lawsuit that Paula Jones filed against him.

The document does not allege he committed perjury or obstructed justice, but Democrats attacked it sharply during the day

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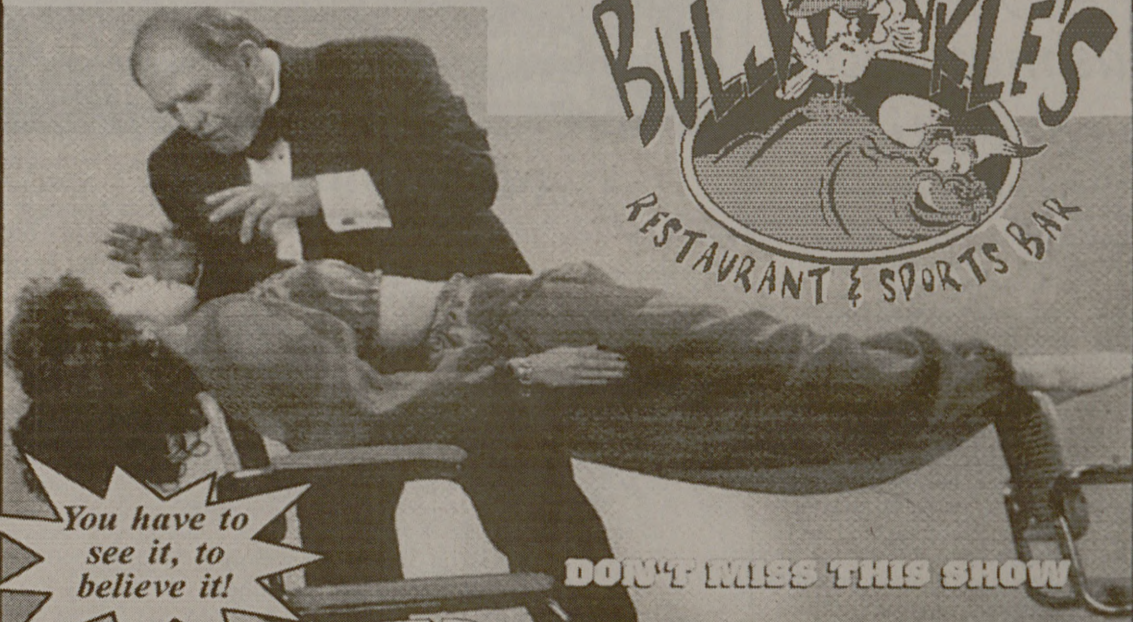
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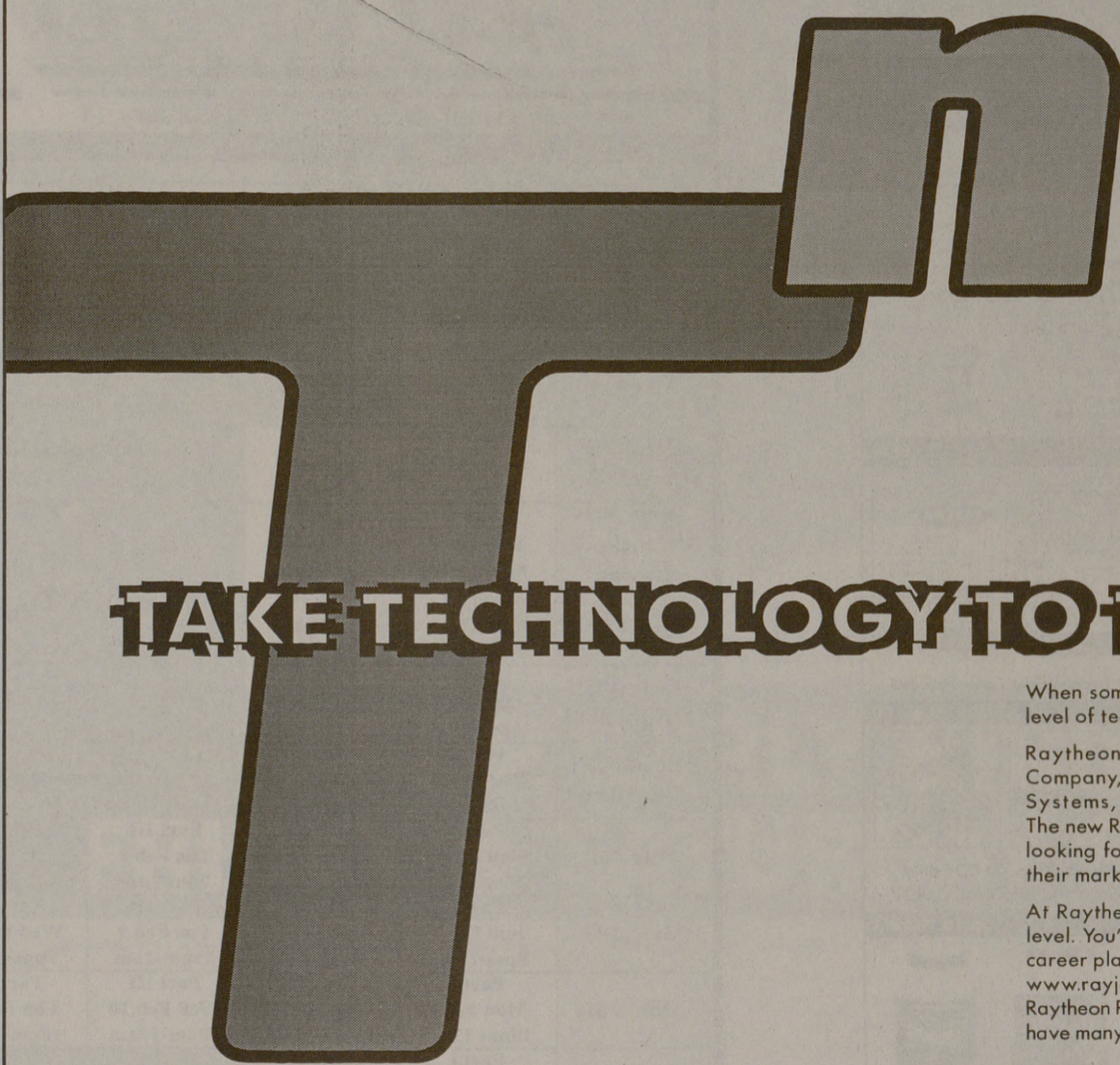
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Polls reveal public growing tired of trial

WASHINGTON (AP) — The American public is growing more critical of the handling of President Clinton's impeachment trial, a poll released Wednesday shows.

And they're mostly Republicans, according to the poll by News/New York Times. While political analysts say there remains time for Republicans to change the subject and push their legislative agenda, the poll found unease with the GOP that the continuing impeachment saga will hurt the prospects in the 2000 election.

Half the conservative Republicans surveyed said the way the Senate and House handled the matter would make it harder for Republicans to win elections. Overall, more than two-thirds of those polled said the Senate does not need to call witnesses and senators decide how to vote on articles of impeachment. Three-quarters said the videotaped testimony of Monica Lewinsky, Vernon Jordan and Sidney Blumenthal should not be made public, and more than three-quarters said the Senate trial has done nothing new about the trial.

Fifty-six percent disagreed with the way the Senate is handling the trial, while 37 percent agreed. Just three weeks ago, in a CBS News poll, 46 percent said they approved the Senate's handling of the trial, and 41 percent disagreed. Among those who identified themselves as conservative Republicans, almost a third said they didn't approve of how the Senate was conducting the trial.

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