

Impeaching a US president

The US House of Representatives will launch a formal impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump following a controversy over whether he sought to enlist a foreign power to smear a domestic opponent. The controversy came to light after a whistle-blower from within the US intelligence community lodged a complaint with an internal watchdog about Mr Trump's conversation with Ukraine's President.



1 INITIATION

A House member can introduce an impeachment resolution, or the entire House can vote to initiate an investigation into whether there are grounds for impeachment.



2 INVESTIGATION

The Speaker of the House directs the House Judiciary Committee, or a special committee, to investigate whether there are sufficient grounds for impeachment. The committee votes on whether to bring a vote to the full chamber.



3 HOUSE VOTE

The entire chamber votes on whether to impeach. If approved with a simple majority, the process moves to the Senate.



4 TRIAL

A trial is held in the Senate in which the President may appear in person, by counsel, or not at all pleading "not guilty". House managers and counsel for the President present opening arguments. After the trial, the Senate meets to deliberate.



5 SENATE VOTES

The Senate votes on whether the President is guilty of the presented articles. They may decide to not vote on all articles if the respondent has already been convicted of at least one article.



6 REMOVAL

If the President is impeached, the Vice-President takes office. If the Vice-President cannot serve, the line of succession falls to the Speaker of the House, then president pro tempore of the Senate.

CURRENT LINE OF SUCCESSION



1 MIKE PENCE
VICE-PRESIDENT



2 NANCY PELOSI
SPEAKER OF
THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES



3 CHUCK GRASSLEY
SENATE PRESIDENT
PRO TEMPORE