

FEATURES

OUT OF OFFICE

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE IMPEACHMENT PROCESS

Audrey McKenzie
FEATURES INTERN
@AUD_MCKEN

The impeachment process is one that does not typically come up in everyday conversation and is unknown to many American citizens. Impeachment is the formal term for removing a public official from office due to some act of misconduct. This has been used, but not followed through with, four times in American history. There has been much debate to begin the process with the new President-Elect Donald Trump. According to USA TODAY, "Just two weeks before Election Day, at least 75 of the 4,000+ lawsuits involving Trump and his business remain open... the number of unresolved cases is unprecedented for a presidential candidate." The discussions are ever-present around this situation and have caused some to question what will happen once Trump takes office. Although it is a complex procedure, below is a further look into the steps that need to be taken to impeach a president.

The process of removing an official from office takes place in the Congress with both the House of Representatives and the Senate voting. It begins in the House. These representatives decide whether or not there is substantial enough evidence to impeach the president. If there is, the Senate then holds the formal trial.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

1. The Judiciary Committee chairman, who oversees the administration of justice, offers a resolution and calls the committee to begin the review. The result of this will lead the Judiciary Committee to tell the House whether or not the impeachment process will move forward
2. The full House discusses each Article of Impeachment (acts of wrongdoing and why the president should be impeached) and votes on each one
3. Only one of the Articles of Impeachment needs a majority vote for the president to be impeached. The trial then moves to the Senate

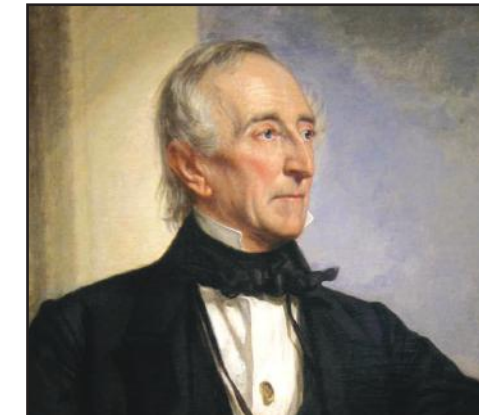
THE SENATE

1. The Senate holds a trial where the president is represented by his lawyers and a group of House members serve as prosecutors
2. The Senate meets in private to debate the outcome and then, in open session, votes on the verdict. The president is convicted if there is a 2/3 vote by the Senate
3. The Senate then votes whether or not to remove the president from office. In addition, the Senate can vote to forbid the president from holding any future public office

REASONS FOR IMPEACHMENT:

In Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution, it is stated that "The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors."

In the history of U.S. presidents, there have been four cases in which the impeachment process has been involved. Although none of them were formally impeached, each of these four presidents was seen to have broken Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution in some way.



ANDREW JOHNSON WIKIMEDIA

The first was with 7th president, Andrew Johnson. Johnson made the decision to remove Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, from the Cabinet. This decision violated the Tenure of Office Act. Because of this, Johnson was brought to trial because it was no small misdemeanor. While the House voted for impeachment, the process still needed to go through the Senate, and Johnson was one vote short of being impeached.



JOHN TYLER WIKIMEDIA

John Tyler ran on the Whig ticket but did not share the same beliefs as the party. The disagreements between the two caused Tyler, on several occasions, to veto bills and anger his party. The Whigs decided to try and impeach him on the basis of wrongful vetoing. However, the process did not last long because the argument for impeaching was flawed, and Tyler stayed in office.



RICHARD NIXON WIKIMEDIA

The impetus of Nixon's impeachment process was the events of Watergate in June of 1972. It was found that the Articles of Impeachment Nixon has abused were obstruction of justice, abuse of power and contempt of Congress. While the impeachment process was well underway, Nixon resigned from presidency on Aug. 9 before the impeachment could be followed through.



BILL CLINTON WIKIMEDIA

The two Articles of Impeachment that Clinton abused were lying under oath to a federal grand jury and obstructing justice. These were abused because of his affair with Monica Lewinsky, the intern in the White House. After Clinton had admitted to this act, the House authorized the impeachment inquiry and the Judiciary Committee approved the Articles of Impeachment. Clinton was impeached on Dec. 19, 1998. This was not the final case though because Senate still had a say. On Feb. 12, Clinton was cleared of the abuse of the Articles of Impeachment.