

February 2021 Impeachment Trial: Chronology of Events

December 18, 2019:

The House of Representatives impeached President Trump for attempting to use U.S. foreign policy to damage his political opponent. **Note:** Impeachment officially charges the president with a serious offense and then it's up to the Senate to convict or acquit. Only two other presidents have been impeached. None, including Trump, have been convicted.

November 3, 2020:

Joe Biden won the presidential election by 7,052,770 votes.

November 4, 2020 - January 4, 2021:

Every court case (over sixty of them, with one minor exception) challenging the election results was thrown out.

December 14, 2020:

Each state certified the winner of their state's electoral votes. Joe Biden won 306 electoral votes, Trump won 232. All major news outlets, including Fox News, reported these election results. Republican leaders, including then Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, acknowledged Biden's win. However, Trump and some of his supporters refused to concede.

January 6, 2021:

Trump gave a speech to supporters near the White House urging them to march to the Capitol and "Stop the Steal."

January 6, 2021:

Thousands of Trump partisans attacked the Capitol. Though members of Congress and their staffs were evacuated (some only minutes before the mob approached), the mob injured dozens of police officers, ransacked offices, and held parts of the building for hours. Five people died during the insurrection, including one police officer.

January 13, 2021:

The House of Representatives voted to impeach Donald Trump for inciting the mob to storm the Capitol.

January 20, 2021:

Trump's term as president ended. Joe Biden was inaugurated as president and Kamala Harris as vice president.

January 26, 2021:

The Senate began deliberations on the impeachment. Conviction requires a two-thirds vote of the Senate, which is now 50 Democrats and 50 Republicans (with Vice President Kamala Harris

casting the deciding vote in the event of a tie). If a president is convicted, the Senate can further vote to disqualify the president from serving in future federal office. (That vote takes only a simple majority.)

January 26-February 9, 2021:

Negotiations about Senate trial procedures.

February 10-11, 2021:

The House managers present their case for conviction to the Senate.

February 12, 2021

Trump's lawyers present their defense. The defense and prosecution teams take questions from senators.

February 13, 2021:

Closing arguments and the final vote. A majority (57) vote to convict, but a two-thirds majority (67 votes) is necessary for conviction.

The participants

Speaker of the House **Nancy Pelosi** (D) chose a team of nine "House managers" to present the case to the Senate. If it were a criminal case, the managers would be the equivalent of the prosecution team.

The team of House managers was led by Representative **Jamie Raskin**, Democrat from Maryland.

Former President Trump's defense team included **Michael Van der Veen** and **Bruce Castor**. They were last-minute appointments after his original team quit two weeks before the trial.

Under the Constitution, after hearing the evidence from both teams, the full Senate, by a majority vote, can decide to either acquit or convict. The senators are, in effect, the jury.

Senator Patrick Leahy, as the senior Democratic senator (or president pro tempore of the Senate) is presiding over the trial. If Trump were still in office, the Constitution would have assigned that job to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Senator Leahy's role is to rule on procedural questions, much as a judge does in a court trial.