

Democrats begin impeachment process against President Trump

Required Annotations		Student-Created Annotations		Summary / Questions / Reflection	
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Student-created

Required (bold)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Democratic leaders in Congress announced an impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump on September 24.

The move does not necessarily mean that Trump will be removed from office. In an impeachment process, a public official is charged with wrongdoing. If the House of Representatives finds **sufficient** evidence of wrongdoing, it can hold a vote on articles of impeachment. If a majority votes to impeach, the official is impeached, but they are not yet removed from office. The Senate must hold a trial, and two-thirds of members must vote to convict.

The two chambers of Congress are currently very divided. The House of Representatives is currently controlled by Democrats, while the Senate is controlled by Trump's Republican Party.

Democratic leaders in Congress made the announcement after the release of a rough transcript of a summer phone call between President Trump and the president of Ukraine.

Trump pushed Ukraine's president to "look into" Joe Biden, according to the transcript. Biden is currently running for the Democratic nomination for president, making him a rival of Trump.

Trump urged Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to work with Attorney General William Barr and Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer. At one point in the conversation, Trump said: "I would like for you to do us a favor."

The Fourth Impeachment Investigation In History

The president's words set the stage for the impeachment debate to come, which will be just the fourth impeachment investigation of an American president in the nation's history. The initial response to the inquiry highlighted the deep divide between the two parties. Many Democrats are supporting the impeachment process, while most Republicans are not.

The call is one part of a whistleblower complaint on the president's activities. A whistleblower is someone who exposes something that could be illegal or **unethical**. Trump's administration has blocked Congress from getting other details of the report. Negotiations were underway to release the complaint publicly last week. It was released on September 26.

Trump spent September 25 meeting with world leaders at the United Nations. On his schedule: a meeting with Zelenskiy.

In a lighthearted appearance before reporters, Zelenskiy said he didn't want to get involved in the American election, but added: "Nobody pushed me." Trump chimed in: "In other words, no pressure."

After months of resistance, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi launched the impeachment **probe** on Tuesday. After viewing the transcript on September 25, Pelosi declared: "Congress must act."

Republicans Stand By The President

Trump has all but dared Democrats to move toward impeachment. He is confident that the image of an investigation led by the opposition party will increase his political support.

During meetings with world leaders, Trump called the investigation "a witch hunt."

Republicans largely stood by the president. They **dismissed** the notion that the rough transcript revealed any wrongdoing by Trump. "I think it was a perfectly appropriate phone call, it was a congratulatory phone call," said Representative Liz Cheney, a House Republican.

In the rough transcript of the 30-minute phone call with Zelenskiy, Trump encourages the Ukrainian leader to talk with Giuliani and Barr. Immediately after saying they would be in touch, Trump references Ukraine's economy, saying: "Your economy is going to get better and better I predict. You have a lot of assets. It's a great country."

In the days before the call, Trump ordered advisers to freeze \$400 million in military aid for Ukraine. This has led to concern that he was holding back the money to make Ukraine give information on the Bidens. Trump has denied that charge and the aid package does not come up in the conversation with Zelenskiy.

Link Between Bidens And Ukraine

What do the Bidens have to do with Ukraine? Ukraine has been known to have issues with corruption and dishonesty among leaders and public officials. Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden was part of a group in charge of a Ukrainian gas company. At the same time, his father led the Obama administration's talks with the country. The timing raised concerns among anti-corruption **advocates**. However, there has been no evidence of wrongdoing by either the former vice president or his son.

Biden said it was "tragedy" that Trump was willing to "put personal politics above his sacred oath."

The possibility of impeachment has hung over Trump for many months. However, the likelihood of an impeachment process had faded after special counsel Robert Mueller's Trump-Russia investigation ended without a clear **directive** for lawmakers. That investigation looked at if Trump had worked with Russia to interfere in the U.S. election. The report did not say he did do it, nor did it say that he did not do it.

Since then, House of Representatives committees have revisited aspects of the Mueller report. Meanwhile, they have also launched new inquiries. They are looking into Trump's businesses and various administration scandals, but these investigations all seemed likely to drag on for months.

Will The Public Get On Board?

Details of Trump's dealings with Ukraine, however, prompted Democrats to quickly shift course. By the time Pelosi announced the impeachment process, about two-thirds of House Democrats had announced moving toward impeachment probes.

Now, Democrats will have to make the case for impeachment to the public. Congress is divided between Democrats and Republicans, and an impeachment inquiry could simply showcase how clearly two sides can disagree when shown the same evidence.

Both chambers of Congress, however, approved resolutions calling for the whistleblower's complaint to be turned over to Congress, which was delivered to Congress on Wednesday afternoon.

Questions

1. Which piece of evidence explains what caused Democrats to open up an impeachment inquiry?
 - a) Democratic leaders in Congress announced an impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump on September 24.
 - b) The House of Representatives is currently controlled by Democrats, while the Senate is controlled by Trump's Republican Party.
 - c) Democratic leaders in Congress made the announcement after the release of a rough transcript of a summer phone call between President Trump and the president of Ukraine.
 - d) Congress is divided between Democrats and Republicans, and an impeachment inquiry could simply showcase how clearly two sides can disagree when shown the same evidence.
2. Which section from the article BEST explains why President Trump thinks the impeachment inquiry could be a positive thing for him?
 - a) "The Fourth Impeachment Investigation In History"
 - b) "Republicans Stand By The President"
 - c) "Link Between Bidens And Ukraine"
 - d) "Will The Public Get On Board?"
3. How did Robert Mueller's investigation affect the possibility of Trump being impeached?
 - a) It was the main reason why Trump's impeachment began on September 24.
 - b) It was the first impeachment inquiry Trump faced as president.
 - c) It made it harder for Democrats to open up a new impeachment inquiry.
 - d) It made impeachment an option but did not ultimately go anywhere.
4. According to the article, why did some lawmakers become concerned about Trump's conversation with Zelenskiy?
 - a) because they were worried that Trump may have withheld money from Ukraine to get information on a political rival
 - b) because they were worried that Trump was making false statements about how good Ukraine's economy was
 - c) because they were worried that Trump was going to give \$400 million in military aid to Ukraine without approval
 - d) because they were worried that Trump was planning to work with the leader of a Ukrainian gas company

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