

# IMPEACHMENT

Article I of the Constitution gives the House of Representatives the power to impeach the president or vice president. Impeachment means that the official has been charged with some kind of misconduct. In order to start the impeachment process, the House will draw up the charges of misconduct. Then, a majority of House members must vote in favor of impeachment. If the vote fails, nothing happens. If it passes, then it is handed to the Senate, which is assigned the power to hold the impeachment trial. If two-thirds of Senators, after hearing the evidence, vote in favor of conviction, the impeached individual is removed from office. A further vote can bar that official from ever holding a public office again.

Three presidents have been impeached while in office: Andrew Johnson in 1868, Bill Clinton in 1998, and Donald Trump twice: in 2019 and 2021. In all of these cases, the Senate failed to reach the majority needed to convict, so all three presidents remained in office until the end of their elected terms.

# APPOINTMENTS & CONFIRMATIONS

The president is given the constitutional power to appoint ambassadors (officials sent to represent their government before the government of another country), cabinet members (heads of the various executive departments and official advisers to the president), and federal judges, including U.S. Supreme Court justices. The power to appoint federal judges gives a president the chance to shape the courts by placing persons who agree with the president's views on law into a lifelong position at the federal courts.

Appointments are made on “the advice and consent” of the Senate, meaning that after the president nominates an official, that nomination must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Senate in order to officially be appointed to the position. Typically the nomination will first go to the relevant Senate committee. For instance, a president’s nominee for a seat on the Supreme Court will first go to the Senate Judiciary Committee, which will review the nominee, research their background, and interview both them and witnesses to their character. The Committee then votes on whether to recommend that nominee to the full Senate. At that point, the full Senate will hold its own hearings and then take a vote on whether or not to confirm the nominee. Only after Senate confirmation will that nominee take an oath of office.

# EXECUTIVE ORDER

An executive order is an order from the president or executive agency that must be obeyed like a law. Nothing in the U.S. Constitution specifically allows the president to issue executive orders; rather, the Constitution simply states: "The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America" And that the president "shall take care that the Laws be faithfully executed." Presidents have used that language and their power as commander and chief over the nation's military to issue executive orders related to changing domestic policy or even carrying out military actions short of or ahead of going to war.

Most executive orders are written so that a president can make decisions without needing the input of Congress. The legislative branch cannot explicitly overturn an executive order, though they could pass a law to cut funding so that implementing the order is impractical (though, in turn, the president could veto this law). On the other hand, the Supreme Court can rule an executive order unconstitutional if it feels the Constitution does not support the order.

# VETO

Article I Section 7 of the Constitution requires that "every bill" and "every order, resolution or vote to which the concurrence of the Senate and the House of Representatives may be necessary" must be signed by the president to become law. This gives the president a central role in the process of lawmaking. Once sent legislation, the president has ten days (not counting Sundays) to make one of three choices about the bill:

1. Sign the bill
2. Veto the bill
3. Take no action at all on the bill

Signing the bill makes it law. If the president disapproves of the legislation and refuses to sign it, this is called a *veto*. Vetoing a bill returns it to Congress. Congress can then vote again on the bill, and if two-thirds (2/3) of both houses of Congress vote in favor of the bill, it overrides the president's veto, and the bill becomes law.

If the president takes no action, the bill will automatically become law after ten days, provided Congress is still in session. If Congress has ended its session before the ten days are up and the president has not signed the bill, however, it dies in a process called a "pocket veto."