

How to Impeach a President

“A nation can survive its fools and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within.” - Cicero¹

Democratic Representative for Texas Al Green was removed from the president’s joint address to Congress earlier this month after pointing at Trump and shouting “He has no mandate to cut Medicaid!”. Green’s action was a protest against impending cuts to Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security by a president who did not campaign on those cuts. Last month, Green indicated on the House floor that he is working on articles of impeachment. “This president is unfit. He should not hold the office—34 felony convictions, two times impeached” Green remarked.² This would be Trump’s third impeachment if the House Judiciary Committee were to take up Green’s efforts. (What is it they say about three strikes?)

Trade War and the Destruction of America

Yesterday Prime Minister Marc Carney visited Rideau Hall to launch a general election. The ballot box question at this moment: Which party is best suited to guide Canada through a trade war with the Trump administration? The next round of U.S. tariffs is expected on April 2 and could easily wreck small businesses and drive up unemployment, with Canadian counter-tariffs feeding inflation. Our American cousins will feel similar effects, contrary to the campaign promises of their president. This at a time of dramatic cuts to the American state and its ability to support those in greatest need. Republican members of Congress are already feeling the heat over their support for Trump and it will only increase.

Big money got Trump where he is and big money can still take him down. As Trump’s transgressions grow ever more vile, there will come a point where damage to the oligarchy’s interests - to the state, to capital markets and to America’s international soft power - can no longer be tolerated. Trump’s increasing power may at some point need to be preempted, lest he reach the position of Russia’s Vladimir Putin and become unstoppable. Before that happens, Musk and the oligarchy may feel the need to meet him on the steps of the Capitol and plunge in the metaphorical knife.

The 25th Amendment

According to National Public Radio, the 25th Amendment states “if the vice president and either a majority of the executive Cabinet or a review body appointed by Congress declare in writing that the president is unfit for office, then the vice president immediately becomes the acting president. But the law also gives the sitting president, Trump in this case, the chance to argue that he is fit for office. In the case of competing arguments about the president's ability to lead, “Congress shall decide the issue,”. For the vice president to assume the power of the presidency, two-thirds of both the House of Representatives and Senate must vote in favor of that outcome.” This actually came very close to happening after the Jan. 6 insurrection, when both Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called for invocation of the 25th Amendment.³ The only other constitutional means for removing a president is through impeachment.

The Impeachment Process

Only the House can impeach. Only the Senate can acquit or convict and a conviction cannot be appealed to the courts.

¹ AZQuotes: [“Marcus Tullius Cicero”](#)

² Martha McHardy, US News/Newsweek (Mar.5, 2025): [“Donald Trump Faces New Impeachment Bid After Speech to Congress”](#)

³ Miles Parks and Miles Katov, NPR (Jan. 7, 2021): [“What the 25th Amendment Says ...”](#)

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The process starts in the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, which holds an impeachment inquiry and, if there are sufficient grounds to suspect “high crimes and misdemeanours”, its members will prepare articles of impeachment. These constitute the case against the president. The full House votes and if there is a simple majority, the case moves to the Senate for an impeachment trial.

During the trial, the articles of impeachment are heard by the full Senate, evidence will be entered, witnesses called and the Senate will vote. Only if a supermajority - at least two-thirds of the Senate - return a guilty verdict can the president be removed from office. Although eight federal judges have been removed in this way, a U.S. president has never been convicted.⁴

A History of Impeachments, Foreign and Domestic

- President Yoon Suk-Yeol of South Korea was impeached and removed last year after declining popularity caused him to declare martial law.⁵
- President Martin Vizcarra of Peru was impeached and removed in 2020, after the popular leader pushed through anti-corruption measures. Presidential impeachments seem to be the national sport in Peru, having had five of them in the last seven years. And all the while, corruption reigns.⁶
- President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil was impeached and removed from office in 2016 for “the misuse of state bank funds to mask budget deficits”.⁷ Her controversial trial was the subject of the prizewinning 2018 documentary “The Trial” and the 2019 Netflix doc “The Edge of Democracy”.

Only three U.S. presidents have been impeached: Andrew Johnson in 1868, Bill Clinton in 1998 and Donald Trump in 2019 and 2021.

- The Democrat running mate on Republican President Abe Lincoln’s ticket in 1864, Andrew Johnson became president upon Lincoln’s assassination in 1865. Impeached for violating the Tenure of Office Act when he fired his Secretary of War, Johnson narrowly avoided conviction by a single vote.⁸
- The infamous Watergate scandal was President Richard Nixon’s downfall in 1974, when he resigned rather than face an impeachment trial that he knew he would lose. Nixon was then pardoned by his successor, Gerald Ford.⁹
- The Monica Lewinsky scandal provided excitement both sexual and political for President Bill Clinton, resulting in charges for perjury and obstruction of justice. He was acquitted on both counts and the episode increased his popularity, to 73 percent. So, a happy ending.¹⁰
- In addition to Donald Trump’s close scrape with the 25th Amendment after the Jan. 6 insurrection, he holds the dubious honour of being the only U.S. president twice impeached. The first impeachment was over his pressuring Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden or risk

⁴ Dave Roos, History (Feb. 28, 2025): [“How Many US Presidents Have Faced Impeachment?”](#)

⁵ Adam Volle, Britannica (Mar. 23, 2025): [“Yoon Suk-Yeol ...”](#)

⁶ Associated Press (Nov. 12, 2020): [“Peru’s ousted president ...”](#)

⁷ Michael Ray and Jeff Wallenfeldt, Britannica (Mar. 3, 2025): [“Dilma Rousseff...”](#)

⁸ Dave Roos, History (Feb. 28, 2025): [“How Many US Presidents Have Faced Impeachment?”](#)

⁹ Biography (Apr. 20, 2021): [“Richard Nixon”](#)

¹⁰ Dave Roos, History (Feb. 28, 2025): [“How Many US Presidents Have Faced Impeachment?”](#)

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losing military aid. The second accused Trump of inciting the Jan. 6 insurrection. He was acquitted in both cases by Republican majority Senates.¹¹

It's a Matter of Timing

Costas Panagopoulos, political science professor at Northeastern University, stated last month: "Right now, it's unlikely Trump would be impeached in the House and even less likely he'd be convicted by the Senate. Impeachment attempts could backfire on Democrats if they're advanced for less serious transgressions, but we cannot rule out the possibility of more flagrant incidents that qualify as high crimes or misdemeanours that would justify impeachment."¹²

But the Oligarchy Runs the Joint

It has become clear that Elon Musk and the oligarchy are in full control of Congress, as illustrated by two recent events. In December of last year, with nearly all 435 members of the House in favour of the Pharmacy Benefit Manager reform bill (a bill that would have saved Americans money on their medications), Elon Musk sent a barrage of tweets overnight that killed support for the bill. So this one oligarch defeated a bill with almost unanimous cross-party support.¹³ Later that same month, Musk helped torpedo a Continuing Resolution (a vital government spending bill) by threatening to unseat House Republicans who voted for it.¹⁴ This control of Congress may be turned against Trump, at a time of the oligarchy's choosing.

Upon Trump's removal from office, J.D. Vance would assume the presidency. A more intelligent and strategic operator than Trump (albeit a low bar to clear), Vance can be expected to be much more subservient to the needs of his financiers. As Project 2025 does not include trade war or territorial expansion, expect those to end with Trump's removal. But a return to American democracy? Don't count on it.

Guy Talevi
March 24, 2025

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Youtube: ["Musks Misinformed Tweets Tank Healthcare Reform"](#)

¹⁴ The Hill (Dec. 22, 2024): [Musk pressure campaign on CR highlights his growing influence](#)