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## [Senate Impeachment Trial Gets Under Way](#)

The impeachment proceedings against President Trump officially began in the Senate this week, as the upper chamber of Congress will hear arguments in favor and against removing the president from office. Seven Democrats from the House of Representatives are making the case for impeachment, reiterating the findings that their body used as justification for voting to impeach the president back in mid-December. On the other side, the president has retained a legal team including Harvard professor Alan Dershowitz and White House council Pat Cipollone. The initial battle between the two sides will revolve around the calling of witnesses. Senate Democrats are keen to hear from multiple individuals, such as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, former National Security Advisor John Bolton, and Director of the Office of Management and Budget Mick Mulvaney. President Trump and his defense team have cited executive privilege in declining to give the aforementioned witnesses permission to testify, and Senate Democrats do not have the requisite number of votes needed to issue subpoenas.

In the opening days of the trial, the impeachment managers from the House of Representatives were given the opportunity to make their case. The president's defense team will take the floor at a later date, most likely early next week. The testimony from the impeachment managers has centered around the depositions given by career diplomats and civil servants during the proceedings in the House. There were arguments made that withholding aid from Ukraine as the president did was unlawful and that there was clear evidence of a quid-pro-quo to prompt an investigation into Hunter Biden and his Ukrainian energy company. Rep. Zoe Lofgren, one of the impeachment managers, accused Vice President Mike Pence of being involved in a cover-up over the blocked testimony of an aide. The aide in question, Jennifer Williams, had given a private deposition, but the White House had intervened to prevent the testimony from becoming public. The impeachment managers viewed this as more evidence that the president and his inner circle was engaged in a cover-up.

So far, Republicans have blocked Democrats' efforts to call witnesses. Republican leaders offered a compromise, where Democrats would be able to submit a list of witnesses that the Senate would then subpoena, but only if Republicans were able to do the same. Namely, the Republicans were keen to hear from Hunter Biden, but Minority Leader Chuck Schumer rejected this offer outright. Part of the reason the offer was rejected was because the witnesses called by the Democrats could still have their testimonies blocked by the White House or another agency, and in that case, Mr. Biden would be the only person to testify.

President Trump's defense team is confident of a quick acquittal for the president. One of his lawyers, Jay Sekulow, told Fox News that it was "ridiculous" they were even there, as the president's conduct didn't meet the standards for impeachment. In order to make their case, the president's lawyers are planning on citing some of the same witness testimony used by the Democrats in the House investigation, but with a different spin. A few of the career civil servants are on the record praising some of President Trump's policies, and his lawyers will use those statements to offset the Democrats' arguments.

The impeachment managers from the House of Representatives will conclude their arguments in the latter part of this week, before the president's defense team presents their case early next week. President Trump is hoping for a quick acquittal, and so far, it looks as though he will get his wish as there are no signs of Republican Senators splitting from the party when the official vote occurs. However, if Democrats are able to persuade some of their Republican colleagues to vote with them to call for witnesses, that could change the outcome dramatically.