



[President Trump Commutes the Sentence of Longtime Adviser Roger Stone](#)

President Trump signed an executive order commuting the prison sentence of Roger Stone, his longtime friend and adviser. Back in February of this year, Stone was sentenced to serve 40 months in jail after being convicted on seven charges – five counts of lying to Congress, witness tampering, and obstructing an official congressional proceeding – relating to the investigation into Russian election meddling. Trump’s commutation comes days before Stone was slated to begin his incarceration, and also wipes away the two years of probation and \$20,000 fine that were included in his conviction. The president’s action was criticized by both Democrats and Republicans, including 2012 Republican presidential nominee and current Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT), who called it “unprecedented, historic corruption.”

Trump decided to act after a federal appeals court panel denied a last-ditch effort by Stone to delay the order for him to report to prison in Georgia next week. It appeared as though Trump was holding out hope that his commutation would not be necessary if Stone could be vindicated through a series of post-trial appeals. His move also comes despite Attorney General Bill Barr’s declaration that Stone’s prosecution was righteous and that his sentence was fair. In recent weeks, Stone contended that the coronavirus outbreak presented a life-threatening risk to him in prison, however the federal judge in his case rejected any efforts to further delay sentencing. By granting a commutation to Stone as opposed to a pardon, the president allows him to continue appealing his convictions.

In response to the news of the commutation, House Judiciary Chairman Jerry Nadler tweeted that the committee would be conducting an investigation: “A jury found Roger Stone guilty. By commuting his sentence, President Trump has infected our judicial system with partisanship and cronyism and attacked the rule of law.” House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff also criticized the move, calling it “among the most offensive to the rule of law and principles of justice.” Furthermore, Senator Mitt Romney was not the only prominent Republican to chime in and chastise the president. Senator Pat Toomey (R-PA) joined the chorus of critical voices, saying that the decision to commute the sentence was a mistake since Stone was “duly convicted of lying to Congress, witness tampering, and obstructing a congressional investigation conducted by a Republican-led committee.”

Former special counsel Robert Mueller, who led the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, wrote an op-ed for the Washington Post condemning Trump’s decision to commute Stone’s prison sentence as well. In the article, Mueller defended the legitimacy and outcome of the two-year probe into alleged collusion between Russian officials and the then Trump campaign, stating that “Stone was prosecuted and convicted because he committed federal crimes. He remains a convicted felon, and rightly so.” The independent investigation conducted by Mueller and his team identified numerous links between the Russian government and Trump campaign officials, including Roger Stone. It also uncovered evidence of communication, that Stone was directly involved in, related to the release of hacked Democratic party emails during the 2016 election.