



[The Second Impeachment Trial in the United States Senate Against Former President Trump Begins](#)

The unprecedented second impeachment trial in the United States Senate against former President Trump officially began this week on Tuesday. Last month, the House of Representatives approved an article of impeachment charging Trump with inciting the January 6th assault on the United States Capitol by a 232-197 margin – with 10 Republicans joining all of the lower chamber’s Democrats in voting to impeach. Now, the 45th president faces judgement in the upper chamber of Congress, where Senators will be tasked with voting to acquit or convict him. Since the United States Senate is split 50-50 between Democrats and Republicans, at least 17 of the latter would need to find Trump guilty in order for him to be convicted by the required two-thirds majority. Most impartial analysts contend that this is extremely unlikely to happen, however it remains to be seen what effect a potential expected acquittal will have on the future of the Republican Party and its electoral base.

The impeachment managers from the House of Representatives began the trial by playing previously unseen security footage from inside the Capitol on January 6th. This video exemplified how close the rioters came from Members of Congress, many of whom were the targets of threats made by the insurrectionists. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had to be evacuated from the Capitol complex entirely, such was the seriousness of the rioters in trying to find and harm her. Despite the footage, which several Republican Senators called “compelling,” there was broad agreement among the GOP caucus that the Democrats weren’t successfully tying former President Trump’s words and actions to the events at the Capitol. In their eyes, while the riot at the Capitol was vile, the former president couldn’t necessarily be held solely responsible for it. A few Republicans deviated from this line of thought, namely Senators Mitt Romney and John Thune, both of whom praised the Democratic impeachment managers for the presentation of their argument.

In a telling preview to the impeachment trial, 44 Republican Senators voted that the trial of former President Trump was unconstitutional since he was no longer in office. Constitutional lawyers and scholars almost unanimously agree that the impeachment is in fact constitutional, but the Republican vote against it indicates the likely outcome of the trial. To this end, Senator Ted Cruz said the result of the trial was “preordained,” as it is becoming clearer by the day that 17 Republicans are unlikely to vote to convict. However, several Republican Senators are viewed as potential “yes” votes on impeachment, including Mitt Romney, Ben Sasse, Susan Collins, and Lisa Murkowski.

Several experts have indicated that the impeachment trial is a watershed moment for the Republican Party. Some GOP Senators who voiced support for impeachment have been censured by their state Republican party, which indicates strong support for President Trump still remains in many states across the country. Senators are being forced to weigh this against the events at the Capitol on January 6th, where no Republican has been willing to dismiss what occurred. By voting against impeaching the former president, Republicans are tacitly endorsing his continued leadership of the party. While he certainly still has strong support from millions of Americans across the country, the Republican Party’s electoral losses with him as the leader of the party cannot be ignored. This has presented a serious conundrum for elected Republicans who have no way to tell how the future will pan out.