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House Democrats subpoena White House for documents in Trump impeachment



U.S. President Donald Trump gives a thumbs up after delivering remarks at Young Black Leadership Summit at the White House in Washington, U.S., October 4, 2019. REUTERS/Yuri Gripas

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. House Democrats on Friday subpoenaed the White House for documents they want to see as part of their impeachment investigation of President Donald Trump.

The chairmen of three House of Representatives committees said they want documents related to a July 25 phone call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that is at the heart of their inquiry.

The three said they were forced to issue the subpoena after the White House failed to produce documents they requested in a Sept. 9 letter.

"We deeply regret that President Trump has put us - and the nation - in this position, but his actions have left us with no choice but to issue this subpoena," said Representatives Elijah Cummings of the Oversight Committee, Adam Schiff of the Intelligence Committee and Eliot Engel of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

State Department has responded to congressional request for documents: Pompeo calls Ukraine inquiry 'silly gotcha game'

They gave the White House until Oct. 18 to produce the information, including who else besides Trump was on the phone call with Zelenskyy.

"This subpoena changes nothing - just more document requests, wasted time, and taxpayer dollars that will ultimately show the President did nothing wrong," White House spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham said in a statement.

White House lawyers believe Trump, a Republican, can ignore lawmakers' demands until the Democratic-controlled House holds a full vote of the chamber to formally approve of the impeachment inquiry, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Earlier, the committees asked Vice President Mike Pence to hand over documents relating to a meeting he held with Zelenskyy and the call between Zelenskyy and Trump. They gave Pence until Oct. 15 to produce any records relating to the July call and a meeting he held with Zelenskyy on Sept. 1.

According to a partial transcript of the call, Trump asked Zelenskyy the "favor" of investigating former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, a leading contender for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020, and his son, Hunter Biden, who had served on the board of Ukrainian gas company Burisma.



Michelle Licata walks outside Manhattan Federal Court after the arraignment of Jeffrey when the Southern District of New York announced charges of sex trafficking of minors conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of minors, in New York, U.S., July 8, 2019. REUT Shannon Stapleton

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North Korea breaks off nuclear talks with U.S. in Sweden

STOCKHOLM (Reuters) - North Korea's top negotiator said late on Saturday that working-level nuclear talks between officials from Pyongyang and Washington that had been seen as a step toward ending months of stalemate, had been broken off in Sweden.

A motorcade carrying North Korean delegation heads for Villa Elfvik on the island of Lidingo off Stockholm, Sweden, October 5, 2019. REUTERS/Anna Ringstrom

The North's chief nuclear negotiator, Kim Myong Gil, who had spent much of the day in talks with an American delegation, told reporters outside his country's embassy that the decision was based on the view that U.S. negotiators would not "give up their old viewpoint and attitude".

"The negotiations have not fulfilled our expectation and finally broke off," Kim told reporters through an interpreter.

"The U.S. raised expectations by offering suggestions like a flexible approach, new method and creative solutions, but they have disappointed us greatly and dampened our enthusiasm for negotiation by bringing nothing to the negotiation table."

The meeting at an isolated conference center on the Swedish capital's outskirts was the first formal working-level discussion since U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met in June and agreed to restart negotiations that stalled after a failed summit in Vietnam in February.

The delegation from North Korea, also known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which is under sanctions banning much of its trade due to its nuclear program, arrived in Sweden on Thursday after Pyongyang unexpectedly said the talks would take place.

Analysts have said the leaders of both countries faced growing incentives to reach a deal, although it is unclear whether common ground could be found after months of tension and deadlock.

Only a day after announcing the new talks, North Korea said it had test-fired a new ballistic missile designed for submarine launch, a provocative gesture that also underscored the need for Washington to move quickly to negotiate limits on Pyongyang's growing arsenal.



A motorcade carrying North Korean delegation heads for Villa Elfvik on the island of Lidingo off Stockholm, Sweden, October 5, 2019. REUTERS/Anna Ringstrom

Speaking in Athens on the last leg of a tour of southern Europe while the talks were still underway in Stockholm, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had said he was hopeful of progress in the talks.

"We are mindful this will be the first time that we've had a chance to have a discussion in quite some time and that there remains to be a lot of work that will have to be done by the two teams," he told a news conference.





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Editor's Choice



A sign left on a window saying 'Pink Floyd built a wall so why can't Trump' is seen during the visit of U.S. President Donald Trump in the County Clare village of Doonbeg



Men work inside a HL-2M Tokamak nuclear fusion reactor under construction in Chengdu



Protests against Ecuador's President Lenin Moreno's government in Quito



Najila Trindade de Souza, who accuses Brazilian soccer player Neymar of rape, is carried by her lawyer Danilo Garcia de Andrade after giving testimony in a police station, in Sao Paulo



People take cover after reports of shots fired at Toronto Raptors victory parade in Toronto



A migrant from India registers to get his permission to cross the country at the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR) in Tapachula



People take pictures as they visit a panda pavilion at the Moscow Zoo on a hot summer day in the capital Moscow, Russia REUTERS/Tatyana Makeyeva TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



A graduating student listens as former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg delivers the Commencement Address at MIT in Cambridge

New York (AFP) - Superstar singer Jessye Norman, an American soprano who showcased her majestic yet intimate voice at opera houses and orchestras around the world, died Monday, her family said. She was 74 years old.

One of the contemporary era's most revered opera singers, the Grammy-winner died "surrounded by loved ones" at a New York hospital due to septic shock and multi-organ failure, the result of complications from a spinal cord injury sustained in 2015, according to a statement obtained by AFP via a spokeswoman.

"We are so proud of Jessye's musical achievements and the inspiration that she provided to audiences around the world that will continue to be a source of joy," said her family.

Born September 15, 1945 in Augusta, Georgia, Norman grew up surrounded by music as one of five children in a family of amateur artists.



Praising her "beautiful tone, extraordinary power, and musical sensitivity," New York's Metropolitan Opera -- where she sang more than 80 performances -- dedicated show of "Porgy and Bess" to Jessye Norman.

She made a foray into gospel at age four, and as a young girl began listening to radio broadcasts of performances at the Metropolitan Opera, where she would go on to star.

"I don't remember a moment in my life

Global Opera Legend Jessye Norman Dies At 74



Norman, pictured in 2013, was one of the contemporary era's most revered opera singers.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

when I wasn't trying to sing," she told NPR in 2014.

A pioneering young black woman in the white world of classical music, Norman quickly became beloved for her soaring voice and effervescent personality.

She studied music at the historically black college Howard University in Washington before going on to the Peabody Conservatory and the University of Michigan.

She established herself in Europe in the 1970s, making her operatic debut in Berlin in 1969 before wowing elsewhere on the continent including Italy. She eventually moved to London and spent years performing recital and solo work.

Norman became the youngest person in a two-decade history to earn a prestigious Kennedy Center Honor at age 52 in 1997, and president Barack Obama bestowed her with a National Medal of

Arts.



President Barack Obama presents the 2009 National Medal of Arts to opera singer Jessye Norman

The superstar singer was also a Commander in France's Order of Arts and Letters, and has an orchid named after her there.

"Jessye Norman was one of the greatest artists to ever sing on our stage," said general manager Peter Gelb in a statement. "Her legacy shall forever live on."

Growing up in the segregated American South, at five years old she sat in a "whites only" section in a train station, becoming an unknowing young activist.



Jessye Norman, shown here in 1989 draped in the French national flag,

sings "La Marseillaise" on the Place de la Concorde to commemorate the bicentennial of the French Revolution. Perhaps best known for her Wagnerian repertoire, the regal Norman made her Met debut in 1983 as Cassandra in Hector Berlioz's "Les Troyens" during the house's centennial season.

"Her huge voice is a velvet wonder, totally seamless when she so desires," wrote The Washington Post's Octavio Roca in a 1980 review.

News of her death triggered a wave of tributes, including from American-Canadian singer-composer Rufus Wainwright, who said "the world has lost one of the greatest voices that we have ever had and heard."



"She poured herself out for us," Wainwright tweeted. "Rest in peace, dearest Jessye Norman."

Norman held a slate of honorary doctorates from prestigious schools including Juilliard, Harvard and Yale.

Her notable performances include two US presidential inaugurations, the 60th birthday celebrations of Britain's Queen Elizabeth, the opening ceremonies of the Atlanta Summer Olympics in 1996, and at the bicentennial of the French Revolution in Paris in 1989.

She was a Commander in France's Order of Arts and Letters, and also had an orchid named after her.

She took on much of the cost of opening the Jessye Norman School of the Arts, which provides free after-school arts programming to disadvantaged children in Georgia. (Courtesy https://www.afp.com/en/ and news.yahoo.com.)

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Although three U.S. presidents have faced impeachment, none have been removed from office.

The final section of Article II, which generally describes the executive branch, specifies that the "President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States" shall be removed from office if convicted in an impeachment trial of "Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors."

This sparse history has given Congress relatively few opportunities to flesh out the bare bones of the constitutional text. The Impeachment Clause was included in the Constitution in order to create another check against abuses by government officials and to give Congress the ability to remove from power an unfit officer who might otherwise be doing damage to the public good.

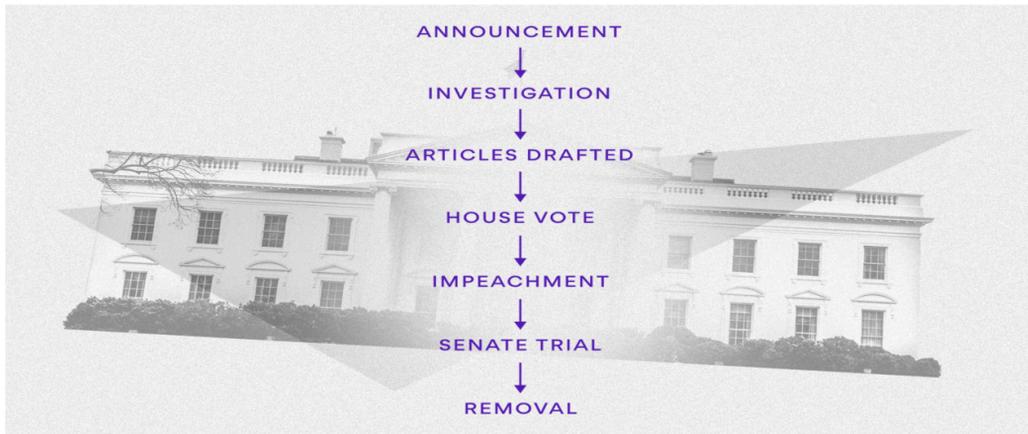
The Senate early on decided that members of Congress should be expelled by their individual chambers rather than be subjected to an impeachment trial. Presidents have acted quickly to remove problematic members of the executive branch. As a practical matter, judges and Presidents have been the primary targets

of impeachment inquiries.

U.S. CONSTITUTION: CONGRESS & IMPEACHMENT. "The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments.... [but] no person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two-thirds of the Members present."

Much of the controversy surrounding the Impeachment Clause has revolved around the meaning of "high Crimes and Misdemeanors," a phrase that is unique to the impeachment context.

The Impeachment Process In The United States



The graphic above explains the typical procedures for impeachment and removal from office.

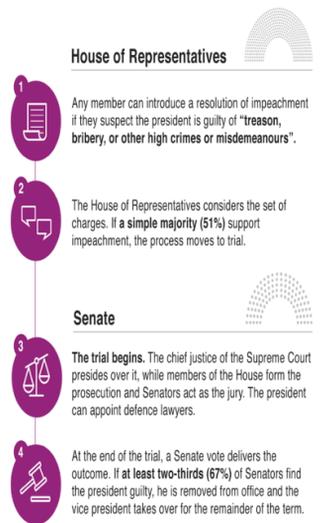
Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

remedy for government officials who are simply bad at their jobs. It is a remedy for abuses of public office. But the line between general unfitness and abuse of office can be blurry.

The first Senate conviction in an impeachment trial was of a federal judge, John Pickering, who was charged with issuing rulings that were "contrary to his trust and duty as a judge" and "in violation of the laws of the United States," as well as appearing on the bench "in a state of total intoxication" in a manner "disgraceful to his own character as a judge and degrading to the honor of the United States."

office. The Senate was not anxious to say that Pickering had committed a crime, but neither was it willing to leave him on the bench.

How the impeachment process works



While the Pickering case was idiosyncratic and awkward, it raised issues that remain unresolved about the scope of the impeachment power. Can a government official be impeached and convicted for innocent mistakes, or must they have bad intentions? Is it sufficient to justify an impeachment and conviction if a government official commits acts that are "disgraceful," contrary to the "trust and duty" of their office, or "degrading to the honor of the United States," or can impeachment only be justified when an official has committed criminal acts?

While still serving as a member of the House of Representatives, Gerald Ford once said that impeachable offenses are whatever a majority of the House considered them to be. The burden is on those who want to bring impeachment charges to persuade a majority of the members of the House of Representatives and two-thirds of the members of the Senate that an act is so serious as to justify removing an individual from office.

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