



This photo of Donald Trump and Nancy Pelosi was taken just before Trump was sworn in as president of the United States, in January 2017.
Image: US Department of Defense, Staff Sgt. Marianique Santos

“No one is above the law.”

Those were the words of Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House, as she announced on Sept. 24 that the United States’ House of Representatives would begin a formal impeachment inquiry against Donald Trump, president of the United States.

In this case, an “impeachment inquiry” is an investigation to find out whether there is enough evidence to “impeach” the president.

Impeachment means charging someone (typically a political leader) with a serious crime—for instance, against the country. If convicted of the crime, they would likely be removed from their job.

Pelosi said Trump used his power as president of the United States for “personal gain.” In other words, to get something he wanted. If that’s true, it would be illegal.

Donald Trump denies having done anything that would cause him to be impeached.

Trump is accused of trying to win the upcoming 2020 election by finding out some bad things about his opponent—in this case, Joe Biden (former vice-president of the United States, and who may also run against Trump in 2020).

Pelosi said that last July, Trump asked the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, to investigate Joe Biden and his son. In a phone call, Trump was overheard to ask Zelensky for “a favour.”

Someone overheard that phone call and “blew the whistle” on Trump. In this case, “blew the whistle” means the person complained to someone about what he’d overheard, and made it public. That person, who has not been identified publicly, is known as a “whistle blower.”

The White House released notes detailing the call Trump had with the president of Ukraine. (See *links*, below.)

Because an impeachment inquiry is an investigation, it allows the House of Representatives to look through some documents they may not otherwise have access to.

Note: This is “breaking news,” which means that there will be much more information coming out about this situation in the coming weeks and months.

LINKS

Notes detailing Trump’s phone call with Ukraine’s president:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Unclassified09.2019.pdf>

The Washington Post article on how impeachment works:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/09/25/what-you-need-know-about-impeachment-inquiry-into-trump/>

Transcript of the US constitution:

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>

The Atlantic: The Scandal Has Spiraled Out of Trump’s Control

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/10/global-scandal/599434/?fbclid=IwAR1prywr8oCVVWnwwBWAmyYwn8nfuvusCBzOTmjIhdRovUW9EdwM4XJONvmg>