

U.S. congressional panel votes to intensify Trump impeachment probe



Washington, September 13 (RHC)-- A Democratic-led congressional committee in the US House of Representatives has voted to intensify their investigation of Republican President Donald Trump, as lawmakers move closer to deciding whether to recommend his impeachment.

The U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee adopted a resolution allowing it to designate hearings as impeachment proceedings. The 41-member panel also approved guidelines that allow it to subject witnesses to more aggressive questioning and quicken the pace of an investigation.

The committee action could prove politically explosive for both Trump and Congress ahead of the 2020 elections. "With these new procedures, we will begin next week an aggressive series of hearings investigating allegations of corruption, obstruction and abuse of power against the president," House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler told reporters after the 24-17 vote.

"No one is above the law," Nadler said in a statement on Wednesday. "The unprecedented corruption, cover-up, and crimes by the president are under investigation by the committee as we determine whether to recommend articles of impeachment or other Article 1 remedies," he said, referring to the US

Constitution's section on legislative powers.

A more aggressive probe could also increase pressure on House Democratic leaders, including Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, who believes the party needs to focus its energies on defeating Trump and the Republicans in the November 2020 election.

Republicans said Democrats lacked the votes to obtain a formal impeachment inquiry and denounced Thursday's action as a show intended to appeal to Democratic voters who want Trump removed from office.

Committee Democrats plan to use the new tactics to help lay out charges of obstruction of justice, allegations of campaign finance violations, witness tampering and unlawful self-enrichment through his business ventures.

Democrats aim to decide by the end of the year whether to recommend articles of impeachment against Trump to the full House. If approved by the chamber, the Republican-controlled Senate would be left to hold a trial and consider the president's ouster.

Only two American presidents have been impeached by the House: Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1999. Neither was convicted by the Senate. President Richard Nixon resigned in 1974 after the House Judiciary Committee approved articles of impeachment against him, but before the full House voted on the matter.

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