

# What's next after President Trump's second impeachment.



On Wednesday, the US House of Representatives voted to impeach President Trump under the charge of “incitement of insurrection” following last week’s Capitol invasion by Trump’s supporters. In this Q&A, LSE US Centre Director [Professor Peter Trubowitz](#) writes that what happens next depends on how soon Speaker Nancy Pelosi sends impeachment papers to the Senate, whether Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell supports Trump’s conviction, and if President-elect Biden seeks to delay the trial to prevent it from derailing the priorities of his incoming administration.

## How will yesterday be remembered?

With any luck, the House’s second vote to impeach President Trump will ultimately be remembered as the moment when America reasserted its commitment to what John Adams famously called “a government of laws and not of men” to prevent the abuse of power. However, in the nearer term, yesterday’s House vote will likely fuel partisan passions in Washington. Listening to many of those House Republicans yesterday, it is hard not to conclude that they will favor adopting a slash and burn strategy toward the incoming Biden administration, attacking Biden’s policies and in some cases, appointees, to reunite the party and to deflect the attention of Trump’s many followers from the former president. How successful these efforts prove will depend partly on how adept Biden is at parrying them, and how willing moderate Republicans in the Senate are to pursue such a strategy.

## What happens next?

The answer lies with four key players: Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, President-elect Biden, and President Trump. Everyone is understandably focused on what the first three are going to do — When will Pelosi transmit the article of impeachment to the Senate? Will McConnell support Senate Democrats’ effort to convict Trump, paving the way for Democrats to gain the 17 Republican votes they would need to reach the required 67 votes for conviction? Will Biden seek to delay or modify the trial to prevent his administration and agenda being subsumed by it? However, President Trump could throw a monkey wrench into their calculations next week if he tries, as [some](#) speculate, to pardon himself and his loyal followers who sought to sack the Capitol last week. If Trump does so, Biden may find it hard to steer clear of the trial and McConnell and other Republicans will likely come under increased pressure to convict Trump.

## What should Biden do now?

The main challenge Biden faces regarding Trump’s impeachment is making sure that his administration and agenda is not derailed by a Senate trial. He will need to find a way to keep a safe political distance from any trial while getting the Senate to focus at least some of its time confirming his Cabinet appointments and pushing his policy agenda forward. Biden would be well-advised to hold regular, perhaps daily, news conferences to keep the public focused on defeating the pandemic and putting people back to work, underscoring that those are his top priorities, not what happens to Donald Trump.

- This article is based on comments Professor Trubowitz gave to [Bloomberg Surveillance](#) on 14 January (from 4:28)
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*Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of USAPP– American Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.*

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