

Resolutions to Censure the President: Procedure and History

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Summary

Censure is a reprimand adopted by one or both chambers of Congress against a Member of Congress, President, federal judge, or other government official. While Member censure is a disciplinary measure that is sanctioned by the Constitution (Article 1, Section 5), *non*-Member censure is not. Rather, it is a formal expression or “sense of” one or both houses of Congress.

Censure resolutions targeting non-Members have utilized a range of statements to highlight conduct deemed by the resolutions’ sponsors to be inappropriate or unauthorized. Before the Nixon Administration, such resolutions included variations of the words or phrases *unconstitutional*, *usurpation*, *reproof*, and *abuse of power*. Beginning in 1972, the most clearly “censorious” resolutions have contained the word *censure* in the text.

Resolutions attempting to censure the President are most often simple resolutions. These resolutions are not privileged for consideration in the House or Senate. They are, instead, considered under the regular parliamentary mechanisms used to process other kinds of legislation.

Since 1800, Members of the House and Senate have introduced resolutions of censure against at least 13 sitting Presidents. Two additional Presidents received criticism via alternative means (a House committee report and an amendment to a resolution).

The clearest instance of a successful presidential censure is Andrew Jackson. The Senate approved a resolution of censure in 1834. On three other occasions, critical resolutions were adopted, but their final language, as amended, obscured the original intention to censure the President. In the 118th Congress, the House agreed to H.Res. 1469, a resolution that, while not containing the word *censure* in its text, directly “condemns” specific individuals within the Biden Administration, including President Biden.

In the remaining cases, censure resolutions remained in committee, without further consideration, or were defeated in a floor vote. Nevertheless, presidential censure attempts have become more frequent since the Watergate era.

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Definition of *Censure*

Censure is a reprimand adopted by one or both chambers of Congress against a Member of Congress, President, federal judge, or other government official. Censure of a sitting Member of Congress is a formal disciplinary action, which is authorized by the Constitution. *Non-Member* censure, however, is not a disciplinary action, and it is not addressed in the Constitution. It is simply a means to highlight conduct deemed by the House or Senate to be inappropriate or in violation of the position held.

There is no uniform language used in resolutions to censure non-Members. This complicates efforts to identify and classify all attempts to censure the President. The presidential censure resolutions listed in this report contain variations of the words or phrases after the word *resolved*: *censure*, *condemn*, *unconstitutional*, *usurp*, *unauthorized*, *abuse of power*, *violation*, or *disapproval*.¹ Early resolutions of censure (Andrew Jackson, 1834; Abraham Lincoln, 1864) criticized the President for acting in “derogation” of the Constitution.²

Since the Nixon era, resolutions of censure have more frequently included the word *censure* in the text. In most such instances, *censure* is paired with the word *condemn*. For instance, a resolution introduced in the 117th Congress, H.Con.Res. 49, intended to “condemn and censure President Joseph R. Biden for the decision to execute a haphazard military withdrawal from Afghanistan.” One resolution agreed to by the House, H.Res. 1469 (118th Congress), contained the word *condemn* but not the word *censure*. Arguably, H.Res. 1469 is a resolution of censure, though, because it condemned the President along with a number of high-ranking officials serving in the Biden Administration.

Congressional Consideration of Censure Resolutions

Two Types of Censure Resolutions

There are two types of censure resolutions: those that target Members of Congress and those that target executive or judicial branch officials. Article 1, Section 5, of the Constitution grants each

¹ Primary sources include the *House Journal*; *Senate Journal*; *Congressional Globe*; *Annals of Congress*; *Register of Debates*; *Congressional Record*; Congress.gov and its predecessor, the Legislative Information System of the U.S. Congress; and other congressional documents accessed in ProQuest Congressional. Secondary sources on presidential censure attempts include Merrill D. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (Oxford University Press, 1987); Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy, 1833-1845* (Harper and Row, 1984); Remini, *The House: The History of the House of Representatives* (Smithsonian Books, 2006); Louis Fisher, *Constitutional Conflicts between Congress and the President*, sixth ed. (University Press of Kansas, 2014); and essays posted by the Senate Historical Office (senate.gov) and the House Office of the Historian (house.gov).

² This report does not identify every pre-1972 resolution that criticized a President in the preamble (“whereas” clauses) that preceded the word *resolved*. For an example of this type of resolution, see the House resolution targeting President Theodore Roosevelt, which was agreed to by the House on January 8, 1909. This resolution was submitted in response to the President’s annual message to Congress, which implied that the House had adopted an amendment to prevent the Secret Service from investigating Members. In the preamble, the resolution stated that the House considered “the language of the President in his message of December 8, 1908, unjustified and without basis of fact and that it constitutes a breach of the privileges of the House.” Therefore, it resolved: “That the House, in the exercise of its constitutional prerogatives, declines to consider any communication from any source which is not in its own judgement respectful.” See *Congressional Record*, 60th Cong., 2nd sess. (January 8, 1909): pp. 645-684.

chamber the ability to “punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour.”³ Resolutions censuring a Senator or Representative are based on this power.

In contrast, Congress has no disciplinary authority over the President except through impeachment in the House and conviction in the Senate. Thus, presidential censure resolutions express the “sense of” the House or the Senate without additional legal implications.⁴

Both Member and non-Member censure resolutions are usually drafted as simple resolutions.⁵ As such, they do not have the force of law and are not presented to the President for signature or veto. However, the House and Senate treat the two types of censure resolutions differently in a parliamentary sense.

Resolutions That Censure a Representative or a Senator

Simple resolutions that censure a Member of Congress for “disorderly behavior”—that is, resolutions carrying out the function of disciplining a Member under the Constitution—are privileged for consideration in both the House and Senate. In the House, privileged resolutions have precedence over the regular order of business; they can be called up on the floor when the House is not considering another matter.⁶ In the Senate, the motion to proceed to a privileged resolution is not debatable.⁷

House censure resolutions generally qualify as constituting a valid “question of the privileges of the House” under Rule IX.⁸ In this context, the censure of a Representative would occur through a formal vote of the House on a resolution disapproving of the Member’s conduct. Such resolutions include the requirement that the offending Member stand in the well of the House as the resolution of censure is read aloud by the Speaker.⁹ (If the resolution reprimands a Member of the House without using the term *censure*, this step is not taken.)¹⁰

³ “Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member,” U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 5.

⁴ A censure measure could also express the “sense of Congress” in the form of a concurrent resolution. For more information, see CRS Report 98-825, “*Sense of*” Resolutions and Provisions, by Christopher M. Davis.

⁵ Most, but not all, presidential censure resolutions have been simple resolutions. Presidents Harry Truman and Richard Nixon were the subject of proposed concurrent resolutions of censure. (Concurrent resolutions must be adopted by both chambers but do not have the force of law.) President Bill Clinton is the only known President to be the focus of joint resolutions of censure. Had these joint resolutions passed, the President would have had to sign them, veto them, or allow them to become law without his signature. See CRS Report R46603, *Bills, Resolutions, Nominations, and Treaties: Characteristics and Examples of Use*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

⁶ See CRS Report 98-315, *Privileged Business on the House Floor*, by James V. Saturno.

⁷ See CRS Report RS21255, *Motions to Proceed to Consider Measures in the Senate: Who Offers Them?*, by Mark J. Oleszek and Sarah B. Solomon.

⁸ “A resolution recommending reprimand, censure, or expulsion of a Member presents a question of privilege, as does one disapproving of the behavior of a Member inside or outside the Chamber. If reported by the Committee on Ethics (or a derivation thereof), the resolution may be called up at any time after the committee has filed its report.”

U.S. Congress, House, *Constitution, Jefferson’s Manual and the Rules of the House of Representatives of the United States One Hundred Nineteenth Congress*, 118th Cong., 2nd sess., 2025 (GPO, 2025), §§ 62-63, p. 29; CRS Report R44005, *Questions of the Privileges of the House: An Analysis*, by Megan S. Lynch; CRS Report 98-411, *Questions of Privilege in the House*, coordinated by Elizabeth Rybicki.

⁹ John V. Sullivan et al., *House Practice: A Guide to the Rules, Precedents, and Procedures of the House* (GPO, 2024), ch. 25, §§22-24, p. 542-545, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-HPRACTICE-118/pdf/GPO-HPRACTICE-118.pdf>.

¹⁰ As of December 2025, the most recent instance of a Representative being formally censured in the House occurred on March 6, 2025. See H.Res. 189 (119th Congress),” censuring Representative Al Green of Texas; U.S. House of (continued...)

In the Senate, the Select Committee on Ethics may recommend disciplinary action against a Senator, including “censure, expulsion, or recommendation to the appropriate party conference regarding such Member’s seniority or positions of responsibility.” The last time a Senator was formally censured by such a privileged resolution was in 1990.¹¹

Resolutions That Censure an Executive or Judicial Branch Official

While resolutions censuring a Member of Congress are privileged in the respective chamber, resolutions that censure, condemn, disapprove of, or express a loss of confidence in an executive or judicial branch official are not privileged and do not enjoy a special parliamentary status. Non-Member censure resolutions express the formal opinion of the House or Senate.¹² Thus, they are considered under the regular parliamentary mechanisms used to process other kinds of legislation.

Most resolutions intending to censure non-Members have been referred to House or Senate committees without further action taken. If one is considered on the floor, the following parliamentary scenarios are possible.

House Procedure

Should a House committee report a non-Member censure resolution, the full House may consider it by unanimous consent, under the suspension of the rules procedure, or under the terms of a special rule reported by the Committee on Rules and adopted by the House.¹³ If widespread support exists for the censure resolution, unanimous consent or the suspension of the rules procedure may be used. Otherwise, the resolution could be brought to the floor under a special rule reported by the Committee on Rules. All three of these parliamentary mechanisms require, at a minimum, the support of the majority party leadership in order to be entertained.

If the censure resolution was not supported by the House majority party leadership, obtaining floor consideration would likely be difficult. Members could try to employ the House discharge rule (Rule XV, clause 2) to bring a censure resolution (or a special rule providing for its consideration) to the chamber floor.¹⁴

Representatives, “List of Individuals Expelled, Censured, or Reprimanded in the U.S. House of Representatives,” <https://history.house.gov/Institution/Discipline/Expulsion-Censure-Reprimand/#censure>.

¹¹ *United States Senate Election, Expulsion and Censure Cases: 1793-1990*, prepared by Anne M. Butler and Wendy Wolff, U.S. Senate Historical Office, 103rd Cong., 1st Sess., S.Doc. 103-33 (GPO, 1995); U.S. Senate, “About Censure,” <https://www.senate.gov/about/powers-procedures/censure.htm>.

¹² See CRS Report RL34037, *Congressional Censure and “No Confidence” Votes Regarding Public Officials*, by Richard S. Beth.

¹³ Under long-standing policies announced by the Speaker, such a unanimous consent request would have to be cleared in advance by the bipartisan committee and floor leadership in order to be entertained. The suspension of the rules procedure lays aside any parliamentary barriers to considering the measure but requires a two-thirds vote for passage. See CRS Report 98-314, *Suspension of the Rules in the House: Principal Features*, by Elizabeth Rybicki, and CRS Report R48308, *Special Rules in the House of Representatives: Purpose and Content*, by Mark J. Oleszek.

¹⁴ In order to discharge a committee from considering a particular measure, at least 218 Members must sign a discharge petition. See CRS Report R45920, *Discharge Procedure in the House*, by Mark J. Oleszek.

Senate Procedure

In the Senate, a Member could make a unanimous consent request to consider a censure resolution at the time it was submitted. If any Senator objected to this request, consideration of the resolution would effectively be blocked.¹⁵

A Senator might instead submit the resolution for it to be referred to committee in the usual way under Rule XVII. The Senate committee might then report the censure resolution, allowing the measure to be called up on the floor by unanimous consent or by debatable motion.¹⁶ In either case, the resolution and any preamble therein would each be separately debatable and amendable, including by non-germane amendment (unless cloture on the censure resolution has already been invoked).

If a Senator offers an amendment that contains censorious language or attempts to amend a resolution of censure, that amendment could be subject to extended debate. As a result, absent unanimous consent or a successful cloture process, the Senate could have difficulty in reaching a final vote on any censure language being proposed.¹⁷

History of Presidential Censure Attempts, 1789-2020, 1st-118th Congresses

CRS identified 15 Presidents who were the subject of censure attempts while in office: 13 by resolutions of censure, one via a House committee report, and another through an amendment to an unrelated resolution. On five occasions, the House or Senate adopted resolutions that, in their introduced form, charged the President with abuse of power. Otherwise, presidential censure resolutions have remained in committee without being reported or were not adopted in a floor vote.¹⁸

As stated earlier, there is no uniform language of censure. Therefore, the designation of censure is somewhat subjective. The censure resolutions identified in this report either contained the word *censure* or explicitly cited an alleged abuse of presidential power, following the word *resolved*.¹⁹ Such resolutions targeted the President as an individual rather than the President's actions or statements.

¹⁵ Should there be an objection to the immediate consideration of such a resolution when it was submitted, the measure would go "over, under the rule" and be placed on a special section of the Senate's *Calendar of Business* dedicated to such resolutions for consideration during the Senate's "Morning Hour." Under current practice, however, the Senate's "Morning Hour" is deemed as expired by unanimous consent, and simple resolutions that go "over, under the rule" are effectively precluded from being considered on the floor except by unanimous consent. U.S. Congress, Senate, *Riddick's Senate Procedure Precedents and Practices*, prepared by Floyd M. Riddick and Alan S. Frumin, 101st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1992, S.Doc. 101-28 (GPO, 1992), pp. 957-967. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-RIDDICK-1992/pdf/GPO-RIDDICK-1992-93.pdf>

¹⁶ See CRS Report RS21255, *Motions to Proceed to Consider Measures in the Senate: Who Offers Them?*, by Mark J. Oleszek and Sarah B. Solomon.

¹⁷ When considering censure resolutions, three-fifths of all Senators (normally 60) must vote to invoke cloture. See CRS Report RL30360, *Filibusters and Cloture in the Senate*, by Valerie Heitshusen.

¹⁸ With two exceptions, the resolutions that were not approved by the House or Senate were all referred to committee with no further action. The exceptions were: John Adams, 1800 (6th Congress), defeated in the Committee of the Whole; and, Ulysses S. Grant, 1871 (42nd Congress), tabled on the Senate floor.

¹⁹ Censure resolutions were identified following a survey of primary and secondary sources. Primary source research included a review of congressional documents and database searches using the keyword *President* with *censure*, *condemn*, *abuse*, *disapprove*, *violation*, *Constitution*, *unconstitutional*, *usurp*, or *unauthorized*.

Prior to 1972, no identified House or Senate resolutions used the word *censure* in reference to the President; instead, resolutions of censure used a range of “censorious” terms to charge the President with inappropriate or unconstitutional conduct. Beginning with the Nixon Administration, resolutions more commonly use the word *censure* in the text of the resolution.

The following sections provide additional information on each censure attempt, from the 1st Congress through the 118th Congress. The measures are also listed in **Table 1**.

Resolutions Adopted (1st-118th Congresses)

The five adopted censure-related resolutions were all simple resolutions.²⁰ As such, they expressed the “sense of” the respective chamber but did not have the force of law or contain any disciplinary authority.

In two cases identified (Presidents Lincoln and Taft), the resolutions were amended on the chamber floor so that they no longer clearly censured the President. In two other cases (Presidents Buchanan and Biden), the resolution’s language may have intended a lesser rebuke than censure. The fifth case, President Andrew Jackson, remains the clearest case of presidential censure by resolution, although his censure was subsequently expunged.

Andrew Jackson (1834)

The Jackson case stemmed from a dispute over the Second Bank of the United States. In 1832, Jackson vetoed legislation to renew the bank’s charter. The following year, he instructed his Secretary of the Treasury, William J. Duane, to begin removing the government’s deposits from the bank. When Duane refused, Jackson replaced him with Attorney General Roger Taney in a recess appointment. Taney subsequently followed Jackson’s instructions.²¹ At the start of the 23rd Congress, in December 1833, the pro-Bank Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, a leader of the anti-Administration coalition, offered a resolution demanding that Jackson submit to Congress an executive paper that related to the removal of deposits. (This message to the President’s Cabinet had been printed in a newspaper but not formally submitted to Congress.) Jackson refused to provide the requested document.²² Two weeks later, on December 26, Clay submitted a censure resolution condemning the actions of the President for replacing Duane for not removing the deposits and another resolution finding Treasury Secretary Taney’s reasons for removing the deposits to be “unsatisfactory and insufficient.”²³

As later modified by Clay, the measure targeting the President resolved, “That the President, in the late Executive proceedings in relation to the public revenue, has assumed upon himself authority and power not conferred by the Constitution and laws, but in derogation of both.” On March 28, 1834, after three months of intense debate, the Senate agreed to the censure resolution. That April, Jackson submitted an “Executive protest,” which argued that the Senate’s censure of a non-Senator was “wholly unauthorized by the Constitution, and in derogation of its entire spirit.” The Senate countered, on May 7, with resolutions that called the President’s protest itself, “a breach of the privileges of the Senate,” which could not be recognized or “entered on the Journals.” By early 1837, however, pro-Jackson Democrats had gained the Senate majority, and they voted to remove the censure from chamber records. On January 16, the Secretary of the

²⁰ For more information about the types of resolutions, see CRS Report R46603, *Bills, Resolutions, Nominations, and Treaties: Characteristics and Examples of Use*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

²¹ Robert V. Remini, *The Life of Andrew Jackson*, abridged ed. (Perennial Classics, 2001), pp. 262-270.

²² *Senate Journal*, 23rd Cong., 1st Sess. (December 2-June 30, 1833), pp. 40-42.

²³ *Senate Journal*, p. 67.

Senate drew black lines around the original resolution in the *Senate Journal*, adding the words *expunged by order of the Senate*.²⁴

James Buchanan (1860)

On June 11, 1860, Representative Robert Hatton of Tennessee (Opposition Party) reported five resolutions on behalf of the Committee on the Expenditures in the Navy Department, a select committee appointed during the previous 35th Congress. All five resolutions charged the Secretary of the Navy, Isaac Toucey, with ethical violations related to military contracts. The fourth resolution also reprimanded the President, alleging that the President and the Secretary awarded contracts based on “party relations” and the “pending elections.” By doing so, the resolution stated, “they have set an example dangerous to the public safety, and deserving the reproof of this House.” However, the fifth resolution, targeting just Toucey, used the word *censured* to condemn the Secretary’s appointment of an engineer with financial interests in Navy projects.²⁵ Thus, it could be argued that the House chose a weaker reprimand for the President.

On June 13, the House voted to adopt all five resolutions. The fourth resolution, targeting the President and Secretary of the Navy, was adopted in a 106-61 vote.

Abraham Lincoln (1864)

On May 11, 1864, Senator Garret Davis of Kentucky (Unionist Party) introduced a resolution reprimanding President Lincoln for allowing two generals to return to military service after they won election to the House.²⁶ Senator Davis’ original measure resolved, “That the arrangement aforesaid, made by the President and the Secretary of War with Generals Schenck and Blair, to receive from them temporarily their commissions of major general, with discretion, on their part, at any time during this session of Congress to resume them, was in derogation of the Constitution of the United States, and not within the power of the President and the Secretary of War, or either of them, to make.”²⁷

The Senate referred the resolution to the Judiciary Committee. On June 15, the committee reported, and the Senate approved, an amended version of the resolution. The new language affirmed that an officer must be re-appointed “in the manner provided by the Constitution,” but no longer overtly censured the President.

²⁴ Peterson, pp. 240-241; *Register of Debates in Congress*, 23rd Cong., 1st Sess. (December 23, 1833-March 28, 1834), pp. 58-1187; “The President’s Protest,” *Register* (May 5-7, 1834), pp. 1612-1712; “Expunging Resolution,” *Register*, January 12-16, 1837, pp. 379-418, 427-506.

²⁵ The fifth resolution stated, “That the appointment by the Secretary of the Navy of Daniel B. Martin, chief engineer, as a member of the board of engineers, to report upon proposals for constructing machinery for the United States, the said Martin at the time being pecuniarily interested in some of said proposals, is hereby censured by this House.” *Congressional Globe*, 36th Cong., 1st Sess. (June 13, 1860), p. 2949. For the entire debate on the resolutions, see pp. 2835-2836; 2938-2951.

²⁶ The generals were expected to resign from military service following their elections to Congress. Thus, if Lincoln allowed them to reengage in military activities, he was arguably recommissioning them without the consent of the Senate. According to the Constitution, The President “by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States.” Article II, Section 2, Clause 2.

²⁷ *Senate Journal*, 38th Cong., 1st Sess. (May 11-June 15, 1864), pp. 428, 559.

William Howard Taft (1912)

On July 15, 1912, Senator Joseph Bailey of Texas (Democratic Party) introduced S.Res. 357 after President Taft was accused of trying to influence a disputed Senate election.²⁸ The original text resolved, “That any attempt on the part of the President of the United States to exercise the powers and influence of his great office for the purpose of controlling the vote of any Senator upon a question involving the right to a seat in the Senate violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution, invades the rights of the Senate, and ought to be severely condemned.”²⁹

In debate, Senator Bailey stated that his resolution targeted a “particular circumstance” involving the current President.³⁰ Still, he was open to amending his own resolution in order to gain supporters. On July 16, in a 35-23 vote, the Senate adopted the amended version of the resolution. The new text substituted *violates* to *would violate* and removed the final phrase *and ought to be severely condemned*. Thus, as amended, the resolution referred to potential presidential actions without specifically censuring Taft’s past behavior.³¹

Joseph R. Biden (2024)

In 2024, the House adopted H.Res. 1469 (118th Congress), a resolution condemning President Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, and 13 additional high-ranking officials in the President’s administration for their roles in the withdrawal of U.S. armed forces from Afghanistan. The resolution stated that the “chaotic” withdrawal in 2021 “led to the injury and death of United States servicemembers, injury and death of Afghan civilians, abandonment of American civilians and our Afghan allies, and harm to the national security and international stature of the United States.”

The House approved the resolution on September 25, 2024, the final day of legislative business prior to the presidential election.³² While at least one media outlet referred to the measure as a “censure,” others described it as a “rebuke.”³³ The resolution itself did not use the term *censure*.

This resolution followed earlier efforts during the 117th Congress to condemn and censure the President for the “decision to execute a haphazard military withdrawal from Afghanistan” (H.Con.Res. 49) and to censure the President for failure to “take care that the laws be faithfully executed” (H.Res. 493). (See the “Censure Attempts, No Resolution Adopted” section of this report.)

²⁸ More information on the election case of William Lorimer is available from the Senate Historical Office at https://www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/electing-appointing-senators/contested-senate-elections/095William_Lorimer.htm.

²⁹ *Congressional Record*, vol. 48 (July 15, 1912), p. 9062.

³⁰ *Congressional Record*, vol. 48 (July 16, 1912), p. 9125.

³¹ *Congressional Record*, vol. 48 (July 16, 1912), p. 9132.

³² Ten Democrats joined 209 Republicans in voting yea; no Republican voted nay. See the roll call vote at <https://www.congress.gov/votes/house/118-2/455> and Tara Suter, “10 Democrats Vote to Censure Biden Officials over Afghanistan Withdrawal,” *The Hill*, September 25, 2024.

³³ For use of the term *censure*, see Rebecca Beitsch, “House Votes to Censure Biden Officials for Afghanistan Withdrawal,” *The Hill*, September 25, 2024, <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/4899580-republicans-condemn-afghanistan-withdrawal/>. For use of the term *rebuke*, see Karoun Demirjian, “House Condemns Biden and Harris over Afghanistan Withdrawal,” *New York Times*, September 25, 2024; and Elizabeth Elkind, “10 Dems Vote with GOP to Rebuke Biden Officials over Chaotic Afghanistan Withdrawal,” *Fox News*, September 25, 2024, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/dems-vote-gop-rebuke-biden-officials-over-chaotic-afghanistan-withdrawal>.

Censure Attempts, No Resolution Adopted (1st-118th Congresses)

Between 1800 and 1952, at least three Presidents were the subject of critical resolutions that were not adopted. In addition, one President (Polk) had his actions condemned by an amendment to a resolution, while another (Tyler) received criticism in a House committee report.

Richard Nixon's years in office (1969-1974) marked a new period in presidential censures. Since 1972, several Presidents have been subject to multiple censure attempts. Most resolutions have used variations of the phrase *censure and condemn*. In reference to Presidents Nixon and Clinton, resolutions have also called for the President's resignation.³⁴ In all cases, these resolutions (1972-2020) were referred to committee with no further action taken.

John Adams (1800)

On February 20, 1800, Representative Edward Livingston of New York (Jeffersonian Republican Party) introduced three resolutions accusing the President of judicial interference. The text described the case of a "fugitive" accused of crimes aboard a British ship. According to the first two resolutions, the President advised a federal judge to release the man into British custody, even though the fugitive claimed to be an American citizen acting in self-defense. The third resolution condemned the President, stating: "his advice and request to the Judge of the District Court ... are a dangerous interference of the Executive with Judicial decisions; and that the compliance with such advice and request on the part of the Judge of the District Court of South Carolina, is a sacrifice of the Constitutional independence of the Judicial power, and exposes the administration thereof to suspicion and reproach."³⁵ On March 8, the full House voted (61-35) in concurrence with the Committee of the Whole's decision to defeat the three resolutions.³⁶

John Tyler (1842)

The Tyler case followed the unexpected death of President William Henry Harrison early in his term of office. Once John Tyler assumed the presidency, he vetoed a number of bills, angering several Members of Congress. On August 10, 1842, the former President, Representative John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts (Whig Party), moved to form a select committee to consider the President's latest veto message and "report thereon."³⁷ The following week, Representative Adams submitted the committee's report, which recommended a constitutional amendment to lower the threshold to overturn presidential vetoes from a two-thirds vote to a simple majority.³⁸

The report itself issued criticism of the President's actions, including his "continual and unrelenting exercise of executive legislation, by the alternate gross abuse of constitutional power

³⁴ The resolutions calling for President Nixon's resignation were H.Res. 684, H.Con.Res. 376, and H.Res. 734 (93rd Congress). The resolution calling for President Clinton's resignation was H.Res. 531(105th Congress). This resolution did not contain the word *censure*, but it did use censorious language in its preamble ("whereas" clauses), including the phrases *abused the Office of the President of the United States*, *subverted the laws of the United States by providing false testimony*, and *diminished the Office of President of the United States*.

³⁵ "Case of Jonathan Robbins," *Congressional Globe*, 6th Cong., 1st Sess. (February 20, 1800), pp. 532-533.

³⁶ *Congressional Globe*, March 8, 1800, p. 619.

³⁷ *Congressional Globe*, 27th Cong., 2nd Sess. (August 10, 1842), p. 874.

³⁸ U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 7, Clause 2: "Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; If he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his Objections to that House in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the Objections at large on their Journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If after such Reconsideration two thirds of that House shall agree to pass the Bill, it shall be sent, together with the Objections, to the other House, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two thirds of that House, it shall become a Law."

and bold assumption of powers never vested in him by any law.”³⁹ On August 17, the House voted (100-80) to approve the report, but did not have the necessary two-thirds support required to adopt the resolution amending the Constitution.⁴⁰

In this case, the House did not approve a censure resolution. Still, the report itself may be considered a form of presidential censure. In response to the criticism, Tyler submitted an official protest, but the House refused to recognize it.⁴¹

James K. Polk (1848)

On January 3, 1848, the House considered a resolution congratulating Generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott for their military service during the Mexican-American War. Representative George Ashmun of Massachusetts (Whig Party) offered an amendment to a motion to refer the resolution to the Committee on Military Affairs. The amendment instructed the committee to add the phrase *in a war unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President* to the resolution. In an 85-81 vote, the House approved the amendment.⁴² However, the underlying resolution was never adopted. Instead, both chambers passed a joint resolution in praise of the generals, and this one included no criticism of Polk or the war.⁴³

Ulysses S. Grant (1871)

The Grant case followed months of acrimony between the President and Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts (Republican Party), who previously served as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. As chairman, Senator Sumner led efforts to defeat the President’s treaty to annex the Dominican Republic. However, the conflict subsequently led to Sumner’s replacement as chairman at the start of the 42nd Congress (March 4, 1871).⁴⁴ On March 24, Senator Sumner introduced an eight-part resolution that addressed the President’s recent deployment of ships along the Dominican coast. Section five of the resolution called the action, without the authority of Congress, “an infraction of the Constitution of the United States and a usurpation of power not conferred upon the President.”⁴⁵ On March 27, Senator Sumner modified his own resolution to insert additional text: this “belligerent intervention ... [was] unauthorized violence, utterly without support in law or reason, and proceeding directly from that kingly prerogative which is disowned

³⁹ *House Journal*, 27th Cong., 2nd Sess. (August 17, 1842), p. 1349.

⁴⁰ *Journal*, p. 1346. At the time, it was considered unusual for the House to approve a report separately from accompanying legislation. However, Representative John Botts successfully moved to divide the question, enabling a separate vote on the report. According to the *Congressional Globe*, “Whilst it was impracticable to carry into effect the object of the resolution, he wished to see who were in favor of the report.” *Globe*, 27th Cong, 2nd Sess. (August 17, 1842), p. 907. In current practice, neither house votes to approve a report accompanying a bill or resolution.

⁴¹ “The Protest,” *Congressional Globe* (August 30, 1842), pp. 973-975.

⁴² *Congressional Globe*, 30th Cong., 1st Sess. (January 3, 1848), p. 95.

⁴³ *Congressional Globe* (February 7, 1848), p. 304; (May 4, 1848), p. 725.

⁴⁴ Sumner’s stance on the treaty damaged his relationship with Secretary of State Hamilton Fish. According to biographer Frederick J. Blue, pro-Grant Republican senators “used Sumner’s break with Fish as proof that his usefulness as chair of the Foreign Relations Committee has been seriously impaired,” prompting the Republican Conference to vote, 26 to 21, for Sumner’s removal as chairman. Frederick J. Blue, *Charles Sumner and the Conscience of the North* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1994), p. 194; David T. Canon et al., *Committees in the U.S. Congress: 1789-1946*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2002), p. 118.

⁴⁵ *Senate Journal*, 42nd Cong., 1st Sess. (March 24, 1871), p. 90.

by the Constitution of the United States.”⁴⁶ Two days later, the Senate voted 39-16 to table the resolution.⁴⁷

Harry S. Truman (1952)

During the Korean War, steel workers were scheduled to strike on April 9, 1952. However, hours before the scheduled walkout, President Truman issued an executive order directing the Department of Commerce to seize control of steel mills associated with the United Steelworkers of America.⁴⁸ In response, Representative Burr Powell Harrison of Virginia (Democratic Party) introduced H.Con.Res. 207, condemning the seizure as “without authority in law.”⁴⁹

The measure marked the first known attempt to reprimand a President with a concurrent resolution. Such measures require the agreement of both houses of Congress. However, on April 9, the resolution was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary and received no further consideration.⁵⁰

Richard M. Nixon (1972/1973/1974)

Beginning in 1972, President Nixon was the subject of several House resolutions (simple and concurrent) that either sought his censure or called for his resignation. Introduced on January 18, 1972, H.Con.Res. 500 (92nd Congress) addressed the President’s conduct during the Vietnam War.⁵¹ It was referred to the House Foreign Affairs Committee. All other resolutions pertained to the President’s conduct related to the Watergate break-in (June 17, 1972) and were referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

The first group of Watergate resolutions, submitted between October 23, 1973, and December 4, 1973, followed the firing of special prosecutor Archibald Cox on October 20. The second set, H.Res. 1288 and H.Con.Res. 589 (August 2 and 8, 1974), were submitted after the Judiciary Committee adopted articles of impeachment (July 27-30, 1974).⁵²

Three resolutions, H.Res. 684, H.Con.Res. 376, and H.Res. 734, stated that the President “should resign” but did not cite a specific abuse of power. Thus, they arguably could be considered “no confidence” resolutions, not measures explicitly expressing censure.⁵³

Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974, one day after the last censure resolution, H.Con.Res. 589, was submitted.

⁴⁶ *Senate Journal* (March 27, 1871), p. 96.

⁴⁷ *Senate Journal* (March 29, 1871), p. 98.

⁴⁸ For more information about the steel mill seizure, see Maeva Marcus, *Truman and the Steel Seizure Case: The Limits on Presidential Power* (Duke University Press, 1994). In June 1952, the Supreme Court ruled that the seizure was not authorized under the Constitution or laws of the United States. U.S. Supreme Court, *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer*, 343 U.S. 579 (1952).

⁴⁹ H.Con.Res. 207 (82nd Congress).

⁵⁰ “Steel Plant Seizure,” in *CQ Almanac 1952*, 8th ed. (Congressional Quarterly, 1953), pp. 320-325, <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal52-1379437>.

⁵¹ According to the resolution, President Nixon violated the law and the “will of Congress,” by “failing and refusing” to withdraw American troops from Indochina as directed by the “Mansfield amendment” (Section 601, P.L. 92-156).

⁵² For more information on the House’s reaction to the President Nixon’s Watergate-related conduct, see Remini, *The House*, pp. 437-442.

⁵³ See CRS Report RL34037, *Congressional Censure and “No Confidence” Votes Regarding Public Officials*, by Richard S. Beth.

William J. Clinton (1998/1999)

The Clinton resolutions concerned the President's testimony before a grand jury in August 1998. The testimony was alleged to contradict an earlier deposition that the President had given in January. In response, some Members of Congress considered either censuring or impeaching the President for perjury and obstruction of justice.

Introduced between September 1998 and February 1999, five resolutions considered alternatives to impeachment proceedings. H.Res. 531 called for the President's immediate resignation. All other resolutions used variations of the phrase *censure and condemn* in reference to the President's conduct.⁵⁴

H.J.Res. 139 and H.J.Res. 140 were introduced on December 17, 1998, two days before the House approved two articles of impeachment, while H.J.Res. 12 (January 6, 1999) was introduced one day before the start of the President's Senate impeachment trial. The final resolution, S.Res. 44, was introduced on February 12, 1999, the same day that the Senate voted to acquit the President of all charges.

Note that H.J.Res. 139, H.J.Res. 140, and H.J.Res. 12 were joint resolutions.⁵⁵ Unlike simple and concurrent resolutions, final approval of joint resolutions requires passage by both houses of Congress, and then the President must sign them or allow them to become law without his signature.⁵⁶ These specific joint resolutions also mandated that the President, by his signature, agree to the following conditions: acknowledge censure and condemnation, donate \$500,000 to the Treasury, not deliver in person any State of the Union address, not involve himself in Democratic Party or campaign activities, and not serve in public office after his term as President concluded. The joint resolutions' procedural and policy requirements made them the most controversial of the Clinton censure resolutions.⁵⁷ However, like the other censure resolutions, the joint resolutions were referred to committee and received no further consideration.⁵⁸

George W. Bush (2005/2006/2007)

The George W. Bush resolutions addressed the Administration's response to the September 11, 2001, attack on the United States and its prosecution of the global war on terrorism. S.Res. 398 (109th Congress) charged the "unlawful authorization of wiretaps of Americans." S.Res. 303 and H.Res. 626 (110th Congress) targeted President Bush and Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales; both measures resolved to censure and condemn them for "disregarding statutes, treaties, and the

⁵⁴ For more information on the President Clinton investigation and congressional response, including impeachment proceedings, see Remini, *The House*, pp. 489-495.

⁵⁵ See CRS Report R46603, *Bills, Resolutions, Nominations, and Treaties: Characteristics and Examples of Use*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

⁵⁶ If a President vetoes a joint resolution, Congress may attempt to override the veto. Veto overrides require a two-thirds vote in each chamber.

⁵⁷ Had the joint resolutions passed, they may have prompted constitutional concerns. See the debate on joint resolutions of censure in the Committee on the Judiciary: U.S. Congress, House Committee on the Judiciary, *Impeachment Inquiry: William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States*, committee print, 105th Cong., 2nd Sess., December 10, 1998, Ser. No. 18 (GPO, 1999), p. 646. The Constitution does not give Congress the authority to punish the President outside of impeachment proceedings; furthermore, Congress may not enact "bills of attainder," which are defined by the Supreme Court as legislation that "determines guilt and inflicts punishment upon an identifiable individual without provision of the protections of a judicial trial." *United States v. Brown*, 381 U.S. 437, 468 (1965); CRS Legal Sidebar LSB10567, *Capitol Unrest, Legislative Response, and the Bill of Attainder Clause*, by Joanna R. Lampe.

⁵⁸ The House resolutions were referred to the Judiciary Committee. The Senate resolution was referred to the Rules and Administration Committee.

Constitution.” The remaining four resolutions—H.Res. 636 in the 109th Congress and H.Res. 530, S.Res. 302, and H.Res. 625 in the 110th Congress—sought to censure either President Bush alone, or in addition to Vice President Richard Cheney, for actions related to the war in Iraq.

S.Res. 302 was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The other resolutions were referred to either the House or Senate Judiciary Committees. While no resolutions were reported out of committee, the Senate Judiciary Committee, on March 31, 2006, held hearings on S.Res. 398.

Barack Obama (2013/2014/2016)

In the 114th Congress, three House resolutions targeted President Obama, using the term *the House of Representatives does hereby condemn and censure Barack Obama*. Another two critical resolutions, introduced in the 113th Congress, did not include the word *censure*. All of the measures were simple House resolutions, which were referred to the Judiciary Committee, and subsequently by the committee to its Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice. The resolutions received no further action.

H.Res. 582 resolved to censure the President “for having willfully disregarded the legislative powers of the duly elected Congress provided by the Constitution of the United States through his executive actions to deprive American citizens of their constitutionally mandated right to bear arms under the Second Amendment.” H.Res. 588 (114th Congress) stated that the President “willfully disregarded the President’s constitutional responsibilities as Commander in Chief of the United States through his continued failed lack of foreign affairs strategy, failure to follow the advice of military and intelligence advisors, and failed national security policy.” H.Res. 607 charged Obama for operating “outside of the rule of law and the authority granted to him by the Constitution of the United States.”

The critical resolutions from the 113th Congress, H.Res. 425 and H.Res. 652, used alternative terms to reprimand the President. H.Res. 425 resolved that the House “disapproves of the President’s failure to ‘take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed’ as required by the Constitution.” H.Res. 652 resolved that the House “condemns the President and the executive branch of Government for actions and acts that are beyond the clearly defined laws of the United States.”

Given that the phrase *condemns the President* follows the word *resolved*, it could be argued that H.Res. 652 is a resolution of censure. In H.Res. 425, the resolution disapproves of the President’s actions, but it does not censure or condemn the President as an individual, so it is not categorized as a resolution of censure in this report.

Donald J. Trump (2017/2018/2019/2020/2021)

In the 115th Congress (2017-2018), President Trump was the subject of two censure resolutions. The first resolution, H.Res. 496, “Condemning and censuring President Donald Trump,” was submitted on August 18, 2017, one week after a counter protestor was killed at the site of a political rally organized by several self-described alt-right and white supremacist groups and individuals. The resolution charged the President with failing to “specifically condemn the ‘Unite the Right’ rally” and for asserting that “‘both sides’ were to blame for the violence in Charlottesville, Virginia.”⁵⁹ The resolution was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary with no further action taken.

⁵⁹ H.Res. 496 (115th Congress), “Condemning and censuring President Donald Trump.”

Early in 2018, another resolution, H.Res. 700, expressing the “sense of the House of Representatives regarding President Donald J. Trump’s remarks about Haiti, El Salvador, and African Nations” was submitted. The resolution sought to “censure and condemn President Donald Trump” for his statements made at a January 11, 2018, White House meeting. According to the resolution, the President’s comments were “hateful, discriminatory, and racist.” The resolution was submitted on January 18, 2018, and referred to the Committees on the Judiciary and to the Committee on Foreign Affairs with no further action.

In the 116th Congress, President Trump was the subject of three resolutions related to the President’s communications on the social media site Twitter (now called “X”) on July 14, 2019.⁶⁰ Two resolutions condemned his use of language, and one resolution sought to censure him.

On July 16, the House agreed to H.Res. 489, a resolution condemning the President’s language. Another resolution that would have condemned the President’s statements, H.Res. 494, was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.⁶¹ The third resolution, H.Res. 490, “condemning and censuring President Donald Trump,” was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, where it received no further action.

On December 17 and 18, 2019, two similar resolutions of censure were submitted: H.Res. 766 and H.Res. 771, respectively. Both resolutions accused the President of abusing “the powers of the Presidency for his own personal political gain” by soliciting “the interference of Ukraine in the 2020 United States Presidential election.” These resolutions were referred to the Committee on the Judiciary with no further action. On December 18, the House agreed to H.Res. 755, “impeaching Donald John Trump, President of the United States, for high crimes and misdemeanors.”

The President was also subject to S.Con.Res. 39, resolving that “Congress condemns the President of the United States for ordering Federal officers to use gas and rubber bullets” against protestors in Lafayette Square.⁶² Like H.Res. 652 (President Obama, 113th Congress), S.Con.Res. 39 does not contain the word *censure* in its text. However, because the condemnation targets the President rather than the President’s actions, it is arguably a resolution of censure.

At the start of the 117th Congress, the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol prompted the introduction of three House resolutions of censure—two introduced by members of the Democratic majority party (H.Res. 14, H.Con.Res. 3) and one by a member of the Republican party (H.Con.Res. 5).⁶³ The resolutions intended to

⁶⁰ Felicia Sonmez and Mike DeBonis, “Trump Tells Four Liberal Congresswomen to ‘Go Back’ to Their Countries, Prompting Pelosi to Defend Them,” *Washington Post*, July 14, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-says-four-liberal-congresswomen-should-go-back-to-the-crime-infested-places-from-which-they-came/2019/07/14/b8bf140e-a638-11e9-a3a6-ab670962db05_story.html.

⁶¹ In the 116th Congress, additional resolutions sought to condemn the President’s use of language (H.Res. 731) or condemn the Trump Administration (H.Res. 499).

⁶² The full resolution states: “*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that the constitutional rights of Americans to peaceably assemble, exercise freedom of speech, and petition the Government for redress of grievances must be respected; that violence and looting are unlawful, unacceptable, and contrary to the purpose of peaceful protests; and that Congress condemns the President of the United States for ordering Federal officers to use gas and rubber bullets against the Americans who were peaceably protesting in Lafayette Square in Washington, DC on the night of June 1, 2020, thereby violating the constitutional rights of those peaceful protestors.”

⁶³ Then-Republican Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy expressed support for censure, as opposed to impeachment, in a floor speech on January 13, 2021. Nick Niedzwiadek, “McCarthy Says Trump ‘Bears Responsibility’ for Capitol Riot,” *Politico*, January 13, 2021; *Congressional Record*, daily edition (January 13, 2021), pp. H171-H172.

- censure and condemn the President for “attempting to overturn the results of the November 2020 presidential election in the State of Georgia” (H.Res. 14);
- censure and condemn the President for “violating his oath of office on January 6, 2021” (H.Con.Res. 5); and
- censure the President for “attempting to overturn the results of the 2020 Presidential election through unlawful means and for inciting insurrection” (H.Con.Res. 3).

On January 13, 2021, the House voted to impeach the President for “incitement of insurrection,” and no further action occurred on the resolutions of censure after their referral to the Judiciary Committee.⁶⁴

Joseph R. Biden (2021)

In addition to H.Res. 1469 (118th Congress) referenced in the “Resolutions Adopted” section of this report—a resolution that condemned the Administration’s “chaotic” withdrawal of armed forces from Afghanistan—President Biden was the subject of two resolutions of censure submitted in the 117th Congress that were not agreed to by the House.

H.Con.Res. 49 (117th Congress) proposed to condemn and censure the President for “the decision to execute a haphazard military withdrawal from Afghanistan ... which decision constitutes a failure to meet acceptable standards of behavior relating to the national security responsibilities of the Commander in Chief.” The resolution was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary and received no further action.

H.Res. 493 (117th Congress) sought to censure the President “for his failure to ‘take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed’ as required by the Constitution” and expressed disapproval for the “usurpation of the legislative authority of Congress by the President of the United States.”⁶⁵ The resolution was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary as the primary committee of jurisdiction and in addition to the Homeland Security Committee.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ The House impeached the President when it agreed to H.Res. 24.

⁶⁵ In its preamble, H.Res. 493 (117th Congress) stated that the Constitution grants Congress the right to enact citizenship and immigration-related legislation and that the President has the duty to enforce such legislation.

⁶⁶ Another resolution, H.Res. 1561 (118th Congress), condemned President Biden’s remarks “referring to President Trump’s supporters as garbage,” and two resolutions with similar text, S.Res. 779 and H.Res. 1371 (118th Congress), condemned “the Biden Administration and its Border Czar, Kamala Harris, for failing to secure the United States border.”

Table 1. Presidential Censure Attempts

(1789-2024, 1st-118th Congresses)

President (Party)	Congress	Chamber	Date Introduced	Measure(s)	Sponsor (Party)	Language	Final Action
John Adams (Federalist)	6 th (1799-1801)	House	February 20, 1800	3 simple resolutions	Edward Livingston (Jeffersonian Republican)	“a sacrifice of the Constitutional independence of the Judicial power, and exposes the administration thereof to suspicion and reproach”	Defeated in Committee of the Whole, March 8, 1800
Andrew Jackson (Democratic Republican)	23 rd (1833-1835)	Senate	December 26, 1833	1 simple resolution	Henry Clay (Anti- Jacksonian)	“has assumed upon himself authority and power not conferred by the Constitution and laws, but in derogation of both”	Agreed to on March 28, 1834 (expunged by Senate vote on January 16, 1837)
John Tyler (Whig)	27 th (1841-1843)	House	August 17, 1842	House committee report	John Quincy Adams (Whig)	“gross abuse of constitutional power and bold assumption of powers never vested in him by any law”	Report adopted on August 17, 1842
James K. Polk (Democratic)	30 th (1847-1849)	House	January 3, 1848	Amendment to a motion to refer a resolution	George Ashmun (Whig)	“a war unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President”	Amendment adopted January 3, 1848 (underlying resolution did not pass)
James Buchanan (Democratic)	36 th (1859-1861)	House	June 11, 1860	5 simple resolutions	Robert Hatton (Opposition)	“the President and Secretary of the Navy ... have set an example dangerous to the public safety, and deserving the reproof of this House”	Agreed to on June 13, 1860
Abraham Lincoln (Republican)	38 th (1863-1865)	Senate	May 11, 1864	1 simple resolution	Garret Davis (Unionist)	“the arrangement aforesaid, made by the President and the Secretary of War ... was in derogation of the Constitution of the United States, and not within the power of the President and the Secretary of War, or either of them, to make” (text as introduced)	Amended resolution agreed to on June 15, 1864
Ulysses S. Grant (Republican)	42 nd (1871-1873)	Senate	March 24, 1871	1 simple resolution	Charles Sumner (Republican)	“an infraction of the Constitution of the United States and a usurpation of power not conferred upon the President”	Tabled on March 29, 1871

President (Party)	Congress	Chamber	Date Introduced	Measure(s)	Sponsor (Party)	Language	Final Action
William Howard Taft (Republican)	62 nd (1911-1913)	Senate	July 15, 1912	S.Res. 357	Joseph Bailey (Democratic)	“any attempt on the part of the President of the United States to exercise the powers and influence of his great office for the purpose of controlling the vote of any Senator upon a question involving the right to a seat in the Senate violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution, invades the rights of the Senate, and ought to be severely condemned” (text as introduced)	Amended resolution agreed to on July 16, 1912
Harry S. Truman (Democratic)	82 nd (1951-1952)	House	April 9, 1952	H.Con.Res. 207	Burr Powell Harrison (Democratic)	“without authority in law ... without due process of law” (the resolution’s summary uses stronger language: “condemning as unlawful”)	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Richard M. Nixon (Republican)	92 nd (1971-1972)	House	January 18, 1972	H.Con.Res. 500	Bella Savitzky Abzug (Democratic)	“the aforementioned conduct of the President and the United States should be, and hereby is disapproved and censured”	Referred to the House Foreign Affairs Committee
Richard M. Nixon (Republican)	93 rd (1973-1974)	House	October 23, 1973	H.Con.Res. 365	Clarence D. Long (Democratic)	“censured and condemned for his publicly announced defiance of the judicial branch”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Richard M. Nixon (Republican)	93 rd (1973-1974)	House	October 30, 1973	H.Con.Res. 371	Clarence D. Long (Democratic)	“censured for his break of public trust and obstruction of the judicial process”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Richard M. Nixon (Republican)	93 rd (1973-1974)	House	August 2, 1974	H.Res. 1288	Paul Findley (Republican)	“censured for said moral insensitivity, negligence, and maladministration”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Richard M. Nixon (Republican)	93 rd (1973-1974)	House	August 8, 1974	H.Con.Res. 589	Dale Milford (Democratic)	“severely censured for moral insensitivity, gross negligence, maladministration, and the violation of his oath of office”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
William J. Clinton (Democratic)	105 th (1997-1998)	House	December 17, 1998	H.J.Res. 139	Amo Houghton (Republican)	“fully deserves, the censure and condemnation of the American people and the Congress”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee

President (Party)	Congress	Chamber	Date Introduced	Measure(s)	Sponsor (Party)	Language	Final Action
William J. Clinton (Democratic)	105 th (1997-1998)	House	December 17, 1998	H.J.Res. 140	Paul McHale (Democratic)	“censure and condemn William Jefferson Clinton for having engaged in a pattern of deceitful and dishonest conduct”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
William J. Clinton (Democratic)	106 th (1999-2000)	House	January 6, 1999	H.J.Res. 12	Amo Houghton (Republican)	“by his conduct has brought upon himself, and fully deserves, the censure and condemnation of the American people and the Congress”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
William J. Clinton (Democratic)	106 th (1999-2000)	Senate	February 12, 1999	S.Res. 44	Dianne Feinstein (Democratic)	“censure William Jefferson Clinton ... and does condemn his wrongful conduct in the strongest terms”	Referred to the Senate Rules and Administration Committee
George W. Bush (Republican)	109 th (2005-2006)	House	December 18, 2005	H.Res. 636	John Conyers Jr. (Democratic)	“censuring President George W. Bush for failing to respond to requests for information concerning allegations that he and others in his Administration misled Congress and the American people regarding the decision to go to war in Iraq” ^a	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
George W. Bush (Republican)	109 th (2005-2006)	Senate	March 31, 2006	S.Res. 398	Russell Feingold (Democratic)	“censure George W. Bush, President of the United States, and does condemn his unlawful authorization of wiretaps”	Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee (hearings held)
George W. Bush (Republican)	110 th (2007-2008)	House	July 10, 2007	H.Res. 530	Robert Wexler (Democratic)	“censure George W. Bush ... and does condemn his ... unconscionable abuse of his authority” ^b	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
George W. Bush (Republican)	110 th (2007-2008)	Senate	August 3, 2007	S.Res. 302	Russell Feingold (Democratic)	“censures President George W. Bush and Vice President Richard B. Cheney for misleading the American people”	Referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
George W. Bush (Republican)	110 th (2007-2008)	Senate	August 3, 2007	S.Res. 303	Russell Feingold (Democratic)	“censures George W. Bush, President of the United States, and Alberto R. Gonzales, Attorney General of the United States, and condemns their lengthy record of undermining the rule of law and the separation of powers”	Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee

President (Party)	Congress	Chamber	Date Introduced	Measure(s)	Sponsor (Party)	Language	Final Action
George W. Bush (Republican)	110 th (2007-2008)	House	August 4, 2007	H.Res. 625	Maurice D. Hinchey (Democratic)	“censures President George W. Bush and Vice President Richard B. Cheney for misleading the American people”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
George W. Bush (Republican)	110 th (2007-2008)	House	August 4, 2007	H.Res. 626	Maurice D. Hinchey (Democratic)	“censures George W. Bush, President of the United States, and Alberto R. Gonzales, Attorney General of the United States, and condemns their lengthy record of undermining the rule of law and the separation of powers”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Barack Obama (Democratic)	113 th (2013-2014)	House	June 26, 2014	H.Res. 652 ^d	Randy K. Weber (Republican)	“condemns the President and the executive branch of Government for actions and acts that are beyond the clearly defined laws of the United States”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Barack Obama (Democratic)	114 th (2015-2016)	House	January 7, 2016	H.Res. 582	Steven M. Palazzo (Republican)	“censure and condemn Barack Obama for having willfully disregarded the legislative powers of the duly elected Congress provided by the Constitution of the United States through his executive actions”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Barack Obama (Democratic)	114 th (2015-2016)	House	January 13, 2016	H.Res. 588	Ted S. Yoho (Republican)	“censure and condemn President Barack Obama for having willfully disregarded the President’s constitutional responsibilities as Commander in Chief of the United States”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Barack Obama (Democratic)	114 th (2015-2016)	House	February 4, 2016	H.Res. 607	Dennis A. Ross (Republican)	“condemn and censure President Barack Obama”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Donald J. Trump (Republican)	115 th (2017-2018)	House	August 18, 2017	H.Res. 496	Jerrold Nadler (Democratic)	“censure and condemn President Donald Trump for his inadequate response to the violence in Charlottesville, Virginia”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee

President (Party)	Congress	Chamber	Date Introduced	Measure(s)	Sponsor (Party)	Language	Final Action
Donald J. Trump (Republican)	115 th (2017-2018)	House	January 18, 2018	H.Res. 700	Cedric L. Richmond (Democratic)	“censure and condemn President Donald Trump for his statements at the January 11, 2018, White House meeting, which are hateful, discriminatory, and racist”	Referred primarily to the House Judiciary Committee and additionally to the House Foreign Affairs Committee
Donald J. Trump (Republican)	116 th (2019-2020)	House	July 15, 2019	H.Res. 490	Steve Cohen (Democratic)	“censures and condemns President Donald Trump for his tweets made on July 14 and 15, 2019, which are xenophobic, promote White supremacist and nativist ideologies, and violate the President’s oath of office to uphold and defend the Constitution, which includes respect for the democratic process and the Congress”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Donald J. Trump (Republican)	116 th (2019-2020)	House	December 17, 2019	H.Res. 766	Tulsi Gabbard (Democratic)	“censures President Donald J. Trump for actions taken by the President as outlined in this resolution, which constitute a willful abuse of power; censures President Donald J. Trump for putting his personal political interests before those of the American people in a manner that undermines the integrity of the United States democratic process”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Donald J. Trump (Republican)	116 th (2019-2020)	House	December 18, 2019	H.Res. 771	Tulsi Gabbard (Democratic)	“censure President Donald J. Trump for actions taken by the President as outlined in this Resolution, which constitute a willful abuse of power; censure President Donald J. Trump for putting his personal political interests before those of the American people in a manner that undermines the integrity of the United States democratic process”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee

President (Party)	Congress	Chamber	Date Introduced	Measure(s)	Sponsor (Party)	Language	Final Action
Donald J. Trump (Republican)	116 th (2019-2020)	Senate	June 4, 2020	S.Con.Res. 39 ^c	Charles Schumer (Democratic)	“condemns the President of the United States for ordering Federal officers to use gas and rubber bullets against the Americans who were peaceably protesting in Lafayette Square in Washington, DC on the night of June 1, 2020, thereby violating the constitutional rights of those peaceful protestors”	Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee
Donald J. Trump (Republican)	117 th (2021-2022)	House	January 11, 2021	H.Res. 14	Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Jr. (Democratic)	“censures and condemns President Donald J. Trump for his call to the Georgia Secretary of State on January 2, 2021, during which he asked Secretary Raffensperger to overturn the results of a freely and fairly administered election in the State of Georgia, thereby compromising the very foundation of our Constitution”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Donald J. Trump (Republican)	117 th (2021-2022)	House	January 11, 2021	H.Con.Res. 3	Eleanor Holmes Norton (Democratic)	“censures President Donald J. Trump for the actions he took as set forth above, including attempting to overturn the 2020 Presidential election and inciting insurrection at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Donald J. Trump (Republican)	117 th (2021-2022)	House	January 11, 2021	H.Con.Res. 5	Brian K. Fitzpatrick (Republican)	“censures and condemns President Donald J. Trump for trying to unlawfully overturn the 2020 Presidential election and violating his oath of office on January 6, 2021”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Joseph R. Biden (Democratic)	117 th (2021-2022)	House	August 27, 2021	H.Con.Res. 49	Jefferson Van Drew (Republican)	“condemn and censure President Joseph R. Biden for the decision to execute a haphazard military withdrawal from Afghanistan, despite sufficient warning as to the probable and deleterious consequences that this decision would have on the national security of the United States and its citizens, which decision constitutes a failure to meet acceptable standards of behavior relating to the national security responsibilities of the Commander in Chief”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee

President (Party)	Congress	Chamber	Date Introduced	Measure(s)	Sponsor (Party)	Language	Final Action
Joseph R. Biden (Democratic)	117 th (2021-2022)	House	June 23, 2021	H.Res. 493	Lauren Boebert (Republican)	“censures the President for his failure to “take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed” as required by the Constitution”	Referred to the House Judiciary Committee
Joseph R. Biden (Democratic)	118 th (2023-2024)	House	September 19, 2024	H.Res. 1469	Michael T. McCaul (Republican)	“condemns [President Biden, Vice President Harris, and] each of the following individuals for their role in the Biden-Harris administration’s withdrawal from Afghanistan and noncombatant evacuation operation, which led to the injury and death of United States servicemembers, injury and death of Afghan civilians, abandonment of American civilians and our Afghan allies, and harm to the national security and international stature of the United States”	Agreed to on September 25, 2024

Sources: *House Journal*, *Senate Journal*, *Annals of Congress*, *Congressional Globe*, *Register of Debates*, *Congressional Record*, *ProQuest Congressional*, and *Congress.gov*.

Notes:

- a. The censure resolution reads in part: “the House ... does hereby censure President George W. Bush for—(1) failing to respond to requests for information concerning allegations that he and others in his Administration—(A) misled Congress and the American people regarding the decision to go to war in Iraq; (B) misstated and manipulated intelligence information regarding the justification for the war; (C) countenanced torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of persons in Iraq; and (D) permitted inappropriate retaliation against critics of his Administration; (2) failing to adequately account for specific misstatements he made regarding the war; and (3) failing to comply with Executive Order 12958.”
- b. The censure resolution reads in part: “the House ... does hereby censure George W. Bush, President of the United States, and does condemn his decision to commute the portion of Mr. Libby’s sentence that required him to spend thirty months in prison, his unconscionable abuse of his authority with regard to the deceitful chain of events concerning the falsifying of intelligence on Iraqi nuclear capabilities and the exaggeration of the threat posed by Iraq, his involvement in the clear political retaliation against former Ambassador and Ms. Wilson, and his decision to reward the perjury of Mr. Libby, which effectively protected President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and other Administration officials from further scrutiny.”
- c. Beginning in 1972, resolutions most clearly intending to censure a President have used the word *censure* in the resolution. H.Res. 652 (113th Congress), S.Con.Res. 39 (116th Congress), and H.Res. 1469 (118th Congress) did not use the word *censure*, but they were arguably resolutions of censure because they “condemn” the President as an individual rather than condemn the actions of the President or the Administration.
- d. In addition to President Biden and Vice President Harris, the resolution condemns 13 then current or former Biden Administration officials.

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