



House rules

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I don't know where Carolyn Edwards ("Due Process Denied," CVN, Vol. 26, No. 5) got her notions of how impeachment must be conducted. Maybe it was from reading White House talking points. Despite what she wrote, there is no requirement that the full House vote to initiate impeachment proceedings. The Constitution says that the House has the power to impeach but says nothing about how. I believe there is plenty of established law indicating that the House may conduct an impeachment any way it wants to.

If Ms. Edwards wants to draw parallels with criminal procedure, then the current activities of the House committees would be analogous to a grand jury investigation, which is conducted behind closed doors. Closed testimony allows witnesses to speak freely and avoids having them align their testimony with that of previous witnesses. The Benghazi hearings were conducted similarly, with a much longer initial period of closed hearings, under rules approved by John Boehner. The due process rights cited by Ms. Edwards will be available to the president should an impeachment proceed to trial in the Senate, which would happen only after a vote of the full House. For a fuller discussion by a legal expert (from the Cato Institute, hardly known for siding with Democrats) see the op-ed by Gene Healy in the Oct. 28 edition of the Los Angeles Times.

The glaring irony here is that a president who seems to have little understanding of, or regard for, the Constitution or the rule of law in general, and who appears to be virtually incapable of telling the truth, is demanding that the House obey some rules he and his supporters have simply made up. But then, there's no shortage of irony in this presidency. Even beginning to cite examples would make this letter far too long for publication.