



House opens impeachment probe of Biden after GOP leaders head off push to vote now

Ximena Bustillo and Deirdre Walsh

June 22, 2023

The House of Representatives approved a resolution referring articles of impeachment against President Biden to two committees — slowing down a push from House conservatives to try to remove the president.

The resolution directs the House Homeland Security and House Judiciary panels to examine any evidence of wrongdoing related to the president's immigration policies. It was approved on Thursday 219-208, along party lines.

Rep. Lauren Boebert, R-Colo., took her own leadership by surprise when she pushed forward earlier this week with a privileged resolution designed to move immediately to impeach Biden. But that move led to pushback from within many corners of the House GOP conference who say the House still needs to develop a case through the regular committee process. Some moderates also believe House Republicans should focus on passing bills showing their party can govern instead of responding to calls from their base to go after the president.

Boebert introduced her measure this month that primarily focuses on immigration and border issues, alleging that Biden violated federal immigration laws that led to increased migration.

This came after Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, another conservative firebrand, filed an impeachment resolution earlier this year — a measure not widely supported within the GOP conference. Greene's effort also targets Biden's immigration policies.

The abrupt move by Boebert threatened to derail other House action and divided House Republicans. After several meetings with key groups across the House GOP conference, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy negotiated with Boebert and other conservatives who wanted to move impeach now to instead refer their measure to the relevant House panels — Homeland Security and House Judiciary. Several GOP members stressed this follows the speaker's pledge to follow "regular order" and contrasts with the process Democrats used for the second Trump impeachment.

"I think impeachment is one of the most awesome powers of the United States Congress and it's not something that needs to be exercised flippantly," Rep. Garret Graves, R-La., a top ally of the

speaker, told NPR. He stressed he has "huge problems" with a lot of the policies the Biden administration has done but added "if anything reaches the threshold of impeachment" it needs to be taken up through the committee process and "needs to be fully justified."

The speaker stressed, "I don't want to do anything that disrupts [House Oversight Committee Chair Rep. James] Comer's investigation or [House Judiciary Committee Chair Rep.] Jim Jordan's investigation," telling reporters the evening before the vote, adding that he believes impeachment votes could discredit those efforts.

The House Thursday approved a reworked resolution from Rep. Lauren Boebert, R-Colo., (right) to refer articles of impeachment against Biden to two House committees. Boebert's original bill caused tension with Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., (left), who filed an impeachment resolution earlier this year. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

Boebert argued on the floor on Thursday that the president's failures to address issues at the Southwest border are grounds for impeachment, saying: "His actions and open borders agenda demonstrates that he has no intention of enforcing our current immigration and border security statutes on the books."

Her reworked resolution refers articles of impeachment against Biden to the House Homeland Security Committee and Jordan's panel, the House Judiciary Committee.

Massachusetts Democratic Rep. Jim McGovern, the top Democrat on the House Rules Committee, mocked House Republicans for spending time on the issue.

"Our founding fathers must be rolling over in their graves, but they are doing this all so they can distract from the fact that Donald Trump stole top secret information and stored it in his bathroom."

Republicans argued that the Biden administration failed to address immigration issues and was responsible for the increase in fentanyl deaths in the U.S. But Democrats pushed back at both.

McGovern cited an article from the Cato Institute, a conservative think tank, that maintained that the border is closed and Biden's policies are similar to those under former President Donald Trump.

"We aren't debating matters that help or uplift people, rather we are debating matters that make Trump happy. It's cowardly and it's sickening," McGovern said.

Arizona GOP Rep. Andy Biggs shot back that northeastern Democrats didn't understand the issues at the border and were downplaying the problems there.

"Tell that to the victims of this border crossing invasion, tell that to them," he said. He added, "this is a result of the dereliction of duty that is putting this country in jeopardy" and that's why it should be investigated by the House Homeland Security Committee.

White House spokesman Iam Sams said Thursday's House vote demonstrated that GOP lawmakers were ignoring important issues and instead focused on "baseless political stunts."

Impeachment efforts lead to blow up among the two leading GOP members

Dynamics between Boebert and Greene burst this week over the impeachment effort after Greene called Boebert a "little b****," as first reported by *The Daily Beast*.

The outburst happened on the House floor on Wednesday, per *The Daily Beast*, when the two lawmakers shared an exchange over each's articles of impeachment against Biden.

Boebert and Greene did not respond to an immediate request for comment.

Boebert's push on her own measure on Wednesday attempted to accelerate action with a procedural move that could have forced a vote on her impeachment resolution. But the move cut into Greene's own proposal by moving Boebert's measure along faster.