

# When presidents get in legal trouble - AvvoStories

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POLITICS

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If you've ever been involved in a [lawsuit](#), you know how [legal](#) disputes can take over your life. You might wonder how President Donald Trump, who was sued in federal court 134 times during his first four months in office, finds time for presidential duties. Trump is not the first president to face [legal](#) troubles, but when it comes to lawsuits, the current president is certainly the most experienced. As a businessman, Trump has been involved in [4,095](#) lawsuits over the last 30 years.

And while no other commanders-in-chief can approach Trump's remarkable numbers, the White House has seen its share of [legal](#) skirmishes. So, in honor of Presidents' Day, here is a sample of presidential [legal](#) struggles.

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## Impeachment

What could be more presidential? Only two U.S. presidents have been impeached, although the current president could be on track to become the third. The first impeachment was against Andrew Johnson, the country's 17th president, who was accused of violating the Tenure of Office Act in 1868. The second president to experience impeachment was Bill Clinton. He was charged with perjury and obstruction of justice in 1998, for allegedly misleading a grand jury about an extramarital affair. Both Johnson and Clinton were acquitted.

Richard Nixon faced certain impeachment back in 1974 for his involvement in covering up the Watergate scandal. Nixon avoided impeachment by becoming the first president to resign while in office.

## Suing the president

Sometimes getting sued is part of the job. Although he was the Secretary of State at the time, James Madison, America's fourth president, was sued for failing to fulfill his official duty. The case, *Marbury v. Madison*, set the precedent that underlies the Supreme Court's power of judicial review.

Half a dozen sitting U.S. presidents have been sued by members of Congress. Those defendants, in alphabetical order, were Presidents George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush, Jimmy Carter, Clinton, Barack Obama, and Ronald Reagan. In every instance, the issue was whether the president had overstepped his authority, and in most of those cases the allegations were specific to the War Powers Resolution. Congress has never been successful in a lawsuit against the president.

## Youthful indiscretion

Whether or not they inhaled, at least two presidents (Clinton and Obama) have admitted to illegal marijuana use during their youth. Neither was ever charged for their drug offenses. Although the story that George W. Bush was arrested for cocaine possession in 2014 was fake, it is true that he was ticketed for a DUI in 1976 at the age of 30. All these activities took place long before any of these men were president.

## Ulysses S. Grant, speed demon

Only one president has ever been arrested during his term in the White House. President Ulysses S. Grant was stopped by a District of Columbia police officer for driving his horse and buggy too fast through the intersection of 13<sup>th</sup> and M Streets. Grant drove the accusing officer to the police station, where he paid a fine and was released. It wasn't his first offense. While still a general in the U.S. Army, Grant had two previous arrests in 1866 for reckless driving. Who knew that offense predated the automobile?

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