



Guide for Local and State Resolutions in Support of Impeachment

What is the goal of local or state resolutions in support of impeachment?

While the formal impeachment process must be conducted by Congress, local and state governments *can* play an important role: they can pass resolutions calling on the U.S. House of Representatives to begin the impeachment process. These resolutions can help build public support for impeachment, and make Representatives understand that their constituents favor starting the impeachment process. Representatives and their staff follow the local political mood, and resolutions in support of impeachment resolutions in their home districts and states may help influence them.

The key point is that you are not asking your local or state government to *itself* begin an impeachment investigation. Rather, you are asking your local or state government to **pass a resolution calling on the U.S. House of Representatives to open an impeachment investigation**. We recommend starting with our [model local resolution](#), although of course it can be modified as needed.

What should I say?

You are asking your local or state government to **pass a resolution calling on the U.S. House of Representatives to open an impeachment investigation**.

While your local or state government cannot *itself* participate directly in the impeachment process, it can almost certainly pass a resolution *asking Congress* to open an impeachment investigation. It is fairly common, and entirely proper, for local and state governments to pass resolutions and send petitions asking Congress to take various actions.

If impeachment is a national issue, why is this an appropriate subject for local government?

City council members in the United States typically take an oath of office promising to support and defend the United States Constitution. Indeed, the U.S. Constitution itself provides in [Article VI](#) that “the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers . . . of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution.”

City council members don’t take an oath only to fix potholes. That’s important too, but when the Constitution is in danger, then their duty is to defend it.

Our democratic republic has a rich tradition of municipal action on national and international issues. As the California Supreme Court noted in 1967, “As representatives of local communities, board of supervisors and city councils have traditionally made declarations of policy on matters of concern to the community whether or not they had power to effectuate such declarations by binding legislation. Indeed, one of the purposes of local government is to

represent its citizens before the Congress, the Legislature, and administrative agencies in matters over which the local government has no power. Even in matters of foreign policy it is not uncommon for local legislative bodies to make their positions known.” *Farley v. Healey*, [67 Cal.2d 325](#) (1967).

Where should I start—my city/town, my county, my state legislature . . . ?

These guidelines apply to any level of local or state government, but it’s probably easiest to start with your hometown. Our [model local resolution](#) also enables you to ask your hometown to pass a local resolution to *ask the state legislature to pass a state resolution* calling on Congress to begin impeachment proceedings.

How do I find out whom I should contact in my local and state government?

For your local government, visit <https://www.usa.gov/local-governments>. For your state representatives, visit https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/.

What is the process for passing a resolution?

It’s different in all 50 states and in local governments around the country. Contact your local government (for example, clerk of a city council) to learn how to propose a new agenda item.

Is there precedent for impeachment proceedings to begin with local efforts?

In 1808, the Mississippi territorial legislature passed resolutions calling upon the House to impeach a federal judge in that territory, and instructing its delegate in Congress to offer a resolution of impeachment. The House authorized a committee to investigate the charges and recommend whether to impeach. Asher C. Hinds, 3 [Precedents of the House of Representatives](#) § 2487 (1907). In 1903, the Florida state legislature adopted a joint resolution calling upon the House to begin impeachment proceedings against a federal judge in Florida. After receiving that resolution, a Member of the House from Florida introduced the state resolution into the record and introduced articles of impeachment. Again, the House appointed a committee to investigate the charges, and the House did eventually impeach the judge. Hinds, *Precedents* § 2469.

Will passing this resolution use much government resources (time or money)?

Passing the resolution itself may involve some spirited public debate, but can be done in a single evening. The costs are minimal: making copies of the resolution and mailing them to the appropriate recipients.