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GOP witness Jonathan Turley. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

GOP's constitutional expert gets basic impeachment fact wrong at hearing

By **Emily Singer** - December 4, 2019 1:58 PM

Law professor Jonathan Turley said Democrats are setting a 'record' for a fast impeachment. That's demonstrably false.

A law professor Republicans called to testify at Wednesday's House Judiciary Committee hearing got a basic fact wrong in trying to defend Donald Trump from impeachment, incorrectly saying that Democrats are running the fastest impeachment process in history.

"That's the problem when you move towards impeachment on this abbreviated schedule that has not been explained to me why you want to set the record for the fastest impeachment," Turley said. "Fast is not good for impeachment."

That accusation is simply false.

The two other times presidents were impeached — Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998 — the impeachment process happened faster than the current process against Trump.

Johnson was impeached for removing Edwin Stanton as secretary of war without congressional approval. The entire process took less than a month.

According to a timeline of events, Johnson removed Stanton as secretary on Feb. 21, 1868. By Feb. 24, 1868 — just three days later — the House passed a resolution impeaching Johnson. And by March 4, 1868, the House delivered articles of impeachment to the Senate. That's less than two weeks.

As for Clinton, the House voted on Oct. 5, 1998 to launch an impeachment inquiry. By Dec. 19, 1998, the House impeached Clinton. That's 75 days.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced the formal impeachment inquiry into Trump on Sept. 24. So far, it's been 71 days since that announcement, and the House has yet to draft or pass articles of impeachment. News reports say that lawmakers have been told not to make plans on Dec. 21 or Dec. 22, as those could possibly be the date for the impeachment vote. That would make the impeachment process 89 days.

One of Turley's main points to defend Trump is demonstrably false.

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