

Indicted Republican George Santos Faces Expulsion Vote Amidst Controversy



The future of Republican George Santos' tenure in the U.S. House of Representatives hangs in the balance as lawmakers prepare to vote on his potential expulsion. The vote, scheduled for Friday, is a response to criminal corruption charges and allegations of campaign fund mismanagement that have plagued Santos since his election in 2022.

House Speaker's Stance

Despite the mounting allegations, House Speaker Mike Johnson has expressed his intention to vote against Santos' expulsion, signaling a division among lawmakers.

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Controversial Career

Santos, 35, has faced significant controversy, including admissions of fabricating his biography. Federal prosecutors accuse him of money laundering and defrauding donors, charges to which Santos has pleaded not guilty.

Previous Survival

In early November, Santos survived a previous expulsion attempt when many Republicans and Democrats voted against his removal, citing the need to wait for the resolution of his criminal case. Another attempt at expulsion could further narrow the Republicans' slim majority.

New Allegations

Recent revelations from a bipartisan congressional investigation indicate that Santos used campaign funds for personal indulgences, including spa treatments, luxury retail shopping at Hermes, and expenditures on the adult content platform OnlyFans. This has swayed some Republicans who initially supported him to reconsider their stance.

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Potential Expulsion

Expelling a member from the House requires a two-thirds majority, necessitating the support of at least 77 Republicans alongside the 213 Democrats in the chamber. Despite expressing reservations, Speaker Johnson has urged members to "vote their conscience."

Historic Implications

If Santos faces expulsion, he would be only the sixth member to be ousted from the House, and notably, the first without a criminal conviction or ties to the Confederacy. The last expulsion occurred in 2002 when Democrat James Traficant was removed due to criminal corruption.

Santos' Defense

On Thursday, Santos, maintaining his innocence, stated on the House floor, "I have been convicted of no crimes." He challenged those calling for his expulsion, emphasizing that the Third Congressional District of New York voters had sent him to represent them.

Lingering Legal Battle

Santos' legal troubles began with revelations about his false claims regarding his education and professional background. A 23-count indictment accuses him of inflating fundraising totals, laundering funds for personal expenses, and unauthorized use of donors' credit cards. Two former campaign aides have pleaded guilty to related fraud charges. Santos' trial is scheduled to commence on September 9, 2024.

Potential Fallout and Future Election

If expelled, Democratic New York State Governor Kathy Hochul would have ten days to call a special election for Santos' seat. The election must take place 70 to 80 days from that proclamation. Before Santos' controversial win in 2022, the district was represented by Democrat Tom Suozzi, among 20 candidates vying for the seat.

In summary, the impending vote on Santos' expulsion is a critical moment in his tumultuous career, with significant implications for his political future and the balance of power in the House.

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