



### [Supreme Court Hears Arguments on Cases Relating to President Trump's Tax Returns](#)

The Supreme Court took up three cases this week pertaining to the release of President Trump's tax returns. The court is deliberating on the subject after lawyers for the president appealed against a lower court's ruling that the records must be released. Both the House of Representatives and a New York State prosecutor are litigating to enable them to subpoena documents from banks and financial institutions used by the president. The justices are hearing oral arguments from both sides via videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The early stages of the arguments revolved around the separation of powers and the level of protection the executive branch should receive from political harassment.

The lawyers for the House of Representatives are arguing that in order for the chamber to properly function as a check against the president, they must be given the power to investigate potential wrongdoing. Three House committees have issued subpoenas for the president's financial documents saying that there could be information within them that would compromise the president to foreign interests. In response, Chief Justice John Roberts pointed out that while the law was clear in the case of an ordinary defendant, the fact that the president was a litigant in this case complicated matters. However, Justice Sonia Sotomayor pointed out that the executive isn't above the law when Jay Sekulow, lawyer for President Trump, emphasized that his client deserved special consideration due to his position.

Lawyers for the House of Representatives say that the House committees that subpoenaed documents are seeking to investigate wrongdoing such as hush money payments, illegal foreign involvement in a political campaign, and violations of ethics rules. They are also arguing that the House being able to investigate presidential wrongdoing is a key component of the checks and balances system. The 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in December that the financial institutions used by the president, namely Capital One, Deutsche Bank, and Mazars USA, were legally obligated to turn over their records. Lawyers for the president have argued that the House subpoenas are part of a larger effort by Speaker Nancy Pelosi to investigate the president for political purposes.

Outside of the House subpoenas, President Trump's New York accounting firm Mazars USA is under subpoena to release documents relating to hush money paid to two women with whom the president is accused of having extramarital affairs with. Lawyers for the president are arguing in this case that the president is being harassed for political purposes, and that the case should be thrown out so that it doesn't distract the president from his duty under the constitution. In the decision authored by the 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals before the case went to the Supreme Court, Judge Robert Katzmann invoked the precedent set by the Watergate scandal in which executive privilege didn't necessarily dictate that the president was able to conceal records and documents from a subpoena.