

Only Two Presidents Have Testified on Hill

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In the past, only two Presidents—George Washington and Abraham Lincoln—have testified before a Congressional committee while still in office, according to one historian.

If President Ford appears before the House Judiciary Committee to discuss his pardon of former President Nixon, he would be the third President in office to answer congressional questions.

Quoting White House researchers, Rep. William Hungate (D-Mo.) said Theodore Roosevelt also appeared, but after he left the presidency.

According to Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. in "The Imperial Presidency," George Washington went to the Senate early in his administration to seek its advice in negotiating a treaty between

the United States and Great Britain.

Fearing an attempt by Washington "to tread on the necks of the Senate," the senators dismissed the President and discussed the treaty among themselves.

Schlesinger says that in 1862 Lincoln appeared before the House Judiciary Committee to discuss leaks of his State of the Union message to The New York Herald.

He also appeared on several other occasions before the Committee on the conduct of the war to discuss his taking of extra war powers.

Schlesinger attributed to legend the story that Lincoln appeared before the War Conduct Committee to deny charges that his wife was a Confederate spy.