



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on December 7, 2023

U.S. House Censures Bowman for Fire Alarm Fiasco

Representative Jamaal Bowman (D-N.Y.) is smarting from a hefty wrist-slap by his colleagues today. The U.S. House voted Thursday morning to censure him for pulling a fire alarm while the chamber was in session.

The incident occurred last September when legislators were voting on a measure to fund the government.

Bowman was rushing from one of the House office buildings next-door to the Capitol and says he mistook the fire alarm lever for a door-opening gadget. He pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge in October and was fined \$1,000 under a deferred prosecution agreement. The contract also required him to write an apology to the U.S. Capitol chief of police, after which charges would be dismissed.



AP Images
Jamaal Bowman

Today's "214 to 191 vote was largely along party lines," reports [NBC News](#), "with Democratic Reps. Chris Pappas of New Hampshire, Jahana Hays of Connecticut and Marie Gluesenkamp Perez of Washington joining all other Republicans in voting yes."

Five of Bowman's Democratic colleagues voted "present": Andy Harris (Md.), Chrissy Houlahan (Pa.), Glenn Ivey (Md.), Deborah Ross (N.C.), and Susan Wild (Pa.).

On Tuesday, Michigan Republican Lisa McClain introduced the privileged resolution to censure Bowman. Democrats came close to blocking the measure with a vote on Wednesday of 201 for, 216 against killing it. Many Republicans believe Bowman acted intentionally to delay the government funding vote.

In ironic foreshadowing, former Representative George Santos (R-N.Y.) recently introduced a resolution to expel Bowman. But Santos ended up on the receiving end of expulsion last week.

What does censure mean? It is "a more severe formal rebuke than reprimanding, but doesn't go as far as expelling the lawmaker from the House," explains Sara Swann of [The Fulcrum](#). "When censured, members can lose their seniority and committee assignments, which significantly diminishes their power in Washington."



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