



Obama inauguration

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Obama retakes oath of office after inauguration stumble

White House says president sworn in again as precaution but original oath is still constitutionally binding

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Out of "an abundance of caution", Barack Obama has taken the oath of office a second time because a word was out of sequence when he was sworn in on Tuesday.

The surprise move came after Tuesday's much-noticed stumble, when the US supreme court chief justice, John Roberts, jumbled the words, prompting Obama to follow suit.

According to the US Constitution, the president must solemnly swear "that I will faithfully execute the office of president of the United States". But on Tuesday, Obama said: "I will execute the office of president of the United States faithfully."

The White House counsel, Greg Craig, said the repeat was motivated by "an abundance of caution," and the White House insisted Obama has been president

since midday on inauguration day - ignoring those who suggested that because the ceremony ran late, the country may technically have been without a president for a few minutes.

Unlike the bungled oath - which was delivered on the Capitol Hill platform before the watching world - yesterday's repeat performance took place in the White House map room in front of a small group of reporters.

On Tuesday, Obama was sworn in with his palm on the same velvet-covered Bible used by Lincoln in 1861, but he had no bible with him at the re-run.

"We decided that because it was so much fun ...," Obama joked to reporters. No TV camera crews or news photographers were allowed in.

After Roberts put on his black robe, he said: "Are you ready to take the oath?"

"Yes, I am," said Obama. "And we're going to do it very slowly."

Roberts then led Obama through the oath without any mistakes.

Obama is not the first president to retake the oath of office, according to the Yale law professor Akhil Reed Amar. At least two other presidents, Calvin Coolidge and Chester Arthur, had to after questions were raised.

Amar told the LA Times: "It puts to rest all the doubts ... We lawyers are cautious folks."

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