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THE EVIDENTIARY RECORD

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Index to House Document 117–9 and Public Reporting and Other Documents Part 1



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Index

Vol. I – Index to House Document 117-9 and Public Reporting and Other Documents Part 1

Vol. II – Public Reporting and Other Documents Part 2

Vol. III – Public Reporting and Other Documents Part 3 and Tweets, Photos, Videos, and Congressional Documents

Public Reporting and Other Documents

3rd Strike Against Voter Fraud Claims Means They're Out After Signature Audit Finds No Fraud, Secretary of State Office, GA (Dec. 14, 2020)

A Reporter's Footage From Inside the Capitol Siege, The New Yorker (Jan. 17, 2021)

Aaron Blake, Trump promoted N.M. official's comment that 'the only good Democrat is a dead Democrat.' Now the man is arrested in the Capitol riot, Wash. Post (Jan. 18, 2021)

Aaron C. Davis, Timeline: How Law Enforcement and Government Officials Failed to Head Off the U.S. Capitol Attack, Washington Post (Jan. 16, 2021)

Aaron Glantz, Read Pence's full letter saying he can't claim 'unilateral authority' to reject electoral votes, PBS (Jan. 6, 2021)

Aaron Katersky & Celia Darrough, Armed protests being planned at all 50 state capitols, FBI bulletin says, ABC News (Jan. 11, 2021)

ACLU Again Calls for Impeachment of President Trump, ACLU Press Release

A.C. Thompson & Ford Fischer, Members of Several Well-Known Hate Groups Identified at Capitol Riot, ProPublica (Jan. 9, 2021)

Acting Secretary Wolf Condemns Violence at The U.S. Capitol, Homeland Security (Jan. 7, 2021)

Adam Brewster, Wisconsin Supreme Court rejects Trump campaign effort to toss ballots just before electors meet, CBS News

Adam Rawnsley & Justin Rohrlich 'Ready to Die': Two Months of MAGA Mob Warning Signs, The Daily Beast (Jan. 7, 2021)

Adele M. Stan, Oath Keepers' Stewart Rhodes Calls for 'Bloody War' if Trump Doesn't Invoke Insurrection Act, Right Wing Watch (Dec. 14, 2020)

ADL, Extremists and Mainstream Trump Supporters Gather for "Million MAGA March", ADL (Nov. 15, 2020)

Aishvarya Kavi, Rampage Weighs on Congressional Staff Members and Capitol Workers, N. Y. Times (Jan. 8, 2021)

Alan Feuer and Nicole Hong, 'I Answered the Call of My President': Rioters Say Trump Urged Them On, N. Y. Times (Jan. 17, 2021)

Alan Feuer, Police Reassess Security for Inauguration and Demonstrations After Capitol Attack, N.Y. Times (Jan. 10, 2021)

Alana Wise, Pence Says He Doesn't Have Power to Reject Electoral Votes, NPR (Jan. 6, 2021)

Alex Ward, 3 top Trump advisers are considering resigning following the Capitol insurrection, Vox (Jan. 6, 2021)

Alex Woodward, 12 National Guard members with ties to militia groups or 'extremist views' removed from inauguration, Independent (Jan. 19, 2021)

Alexander Bolton, GOP Senator: Trump 'Committed Impeachable Offenses', The Hill (Jan. 9, 2021)

Alexander Mallin and Luke Barr, Man Who Allegedly Broke Into Pelosi's Office Charged with 3 Federal Counts, ABC News (Jan. 9, 2021)

Alexander Smith & Saphora Smith, U.S. foes like China and Iran see opportunity in the chaos of Trump-stoked riot at Capitol, NBC News, (Jan. 8, 2021)

Ali Swensonn, AP Fact Check: Trump legal team's batch of false vote claims, AP (Nov. 19, 2020)

Alison Durkee, Pennsylvania GOP lawmakers make clear they won't overturn the election as Trump wants, Forbes (Dec. 3, 2020)

Allan Smith, D.C. Police make several arrests ahead of major pro-Trump election protest, NBC News (Jan. 5, 2021)

Allison Klein and Rebecca Tan, Capitol Police officer who was on duty during the riot has died by suicide, his family says, Wash. Post (Jan. 11, 2021)

Alyssa Pointer, Trump's pick for U.S. attorney in Georgia dismisses election fraud claims: 'There's just nothing to them,' AJC (Jan. 12, 2021)

Amanda Macias, Mattis blames Trump for violence at Capitol, says his actions 'poison our respect for fellow citizens', CNBC (Jan. 6, 2021)

Amanda Seitz, Mob at U.S. Capitol encouraged by online conspiracy theories, AP (Jan. 7, 2021)

Amy Brittain, et al., The Capitol mob: A raging collection of grievances and disillusionment, Wash. Post (Jan. 10, 2021)

Amy Gardner, 'Find the fraud': Trump pressured a Georgia elections investigator in a separate call legal experts say could amount to obstruction, Wash. Post (Jan. 9, 2021)

Amy Gardner, Ga. Secretary of state says fellow Republicans are pressuring him to find ways to exclude ballots, Wash. Post. (Nov. 16, 2020)

Amy Gardner et al., Trump calls Georgia governor to pressure him for help overturning Biden's win in the state, Wash. Post. (Dec. 5, 2020)

Amy Gardner and Keith Newell, 'Someone's going to get killed': GOP election official in Georgia blames President Trump for fostering violent threats, Wash. Post (Dec. 1, 2020)

Amy Gardner & Paulina Firozi, Here's the full transcript and audio of the call between Trump and Raffensperger, Wash. Post (Jan. 5, 2021)

Amy Gardner, 'I just want to find 11,780 votes': In extraordinary hour-long call, Trump pressures Georgia secretary of state to recalculate the vote in his favor, Wash. Post (Jan. 3, 2021)

Andrew Beaujon, MAGA Geniuses Plot Takeover of US Capitol, Washingtonian (Jan. 5, 2021)

Andrew Prokop, Republican senator: White House aides say Trump was "delighted" as Capitol was stormed, Vox (Jan. 8, 2021)

Annie Palmer, Facebook will block Trump from posting at least for the remainder of his term, CNBC (Jan. 7, 2021)

AP, FBI warns of plans for nationwide armed protests next week, POLITICO (Jan. 11, 2021)

Arizona Republican Party v. Fontes Order

Aruna Viswanatha, Sadie Gurman & Cameron McWhirter, White House Forced Georgia U.S. Attorney to Resign, Wall Street Journal (Jan. 9, 2021)

Ashley Parker et al., Six hours of paralysis: Inside Trump's failure to act after a mob stormed the Capitol, Wash. Post (Jan. 11, 2021)

Assistant Attorney General Eric Dreiband Announces Departure from Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice (Jan. 17, 2021)

Associated Press, Judge bans Proud Boys leader from Washington, D.C., after arrest, NBC News (Jan. 5, 2021)

Associated Press, Trump doesn't ask backers to disperse after storming Capitol, PBS (Jan. 6, 2021)

Azi Paybarah and Brent Lewis, Stunning Images as a Mob Storms the U.S. Capitol, N. Y. Times (Jan. 6, 2021)

Ben Collins & Brandy Zadrozny, Extremists made little secret of ambitions to 'occupy' Capitol in weeks before attack, NBC News (Jan. 8, 2021)

Ben Collins & Brandy Zadrozny, Proud Boys celebrate after Trump debate callout, NBC News (Sept. 29, 2020)

Ben Kasslen, Trump supporters who died during Capitol riot left online presence, NBC (Jan. 7, 2021)

Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution 282 (1967)

Betsy Devos Letter of Resignation (Jan. 7, 2021)

Bob Christie & Jacques Billeaud, Arizona Supreme Court upholds election challenge dismissal, AP (Jan. 5, 2021)

Brad Petrishen, Video shows Congressman McGovern exiting House soon before woman fatally shot, Telegram & Gazette (Jan. 8, 2021)

Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969)

Brandy Zadronzyny & Ben Collins, Violent threats ripple through far-right internet forums ahead of protest, NBC (Jan. 5, 2021)

Brian Schwartz, Dark-money GOP fund funneled millions of dollars to groups that pushed voter fraud claims, CNBC (Jan. 13, 2021)

Brian Fung, Capitol riots raise urgent concerns about Congress's information security, CNN (Jan. 8, 2021)

Brian Stelter and Oliver Darcy, Even worse than it looked on live TV, CNN (Jan. 9, 2021)

Caitlin McFall, Proud Boys flock to Washington 'incognito' for Jan. 6 protests, Fox News (Jan. 2, 2021)

Carol D. Leonnig, Capitol Police intelligence report warned three days before attack that 'Congress itself' could be targeted, Wash. Post (Jan. 15, 2021)

Carol D. Leonnig & Tom Hamburger, Michigan attorney general ponders criminal probes of state and local officials who bend to Trump's will on overturning election results, Wash. Post (Nov. 21, 2020)

Carol D. Leonnig et al, Outgoing Capitol Police chief: House, Senate security officials hamstrung efforts to call in National Guard, Wash. Post (Jan. 10, 2021)

Carol Robinson, Lonnie Coffman, Alabama man arrested at DC riot, had homemade napalm in Mason jars, feds say, AL (Jan. 8, 2021)

Casey Tolan et al., GOP lawmakers' fiery language under more scrutiny after deadly Capitol riot, CNN (Jan. 13, 2021)

Cass Sunstein, Does the 25th Amendment Apply to Trump? Quite Possibly, Bloomberg (Jan. 7, 2021)

Caroline Linton, Capitol Police officer who responded to attack has died, CBS News (Jan. 11, 2021)

Chandelis Duster, 'Credible threats of violence' prompt closure of Michigan capitol to the public ahead of Electoral College vote, CNN (Dec. 14, 2020)

Chaos in Capitol: Riots over election, Peninsula Daily News (Jan. 6, 2021)

Chelsea Stahl, Jan. 7 highlights and analysis of unrest in Washington, D.C., NBC (Jan. 8, 2021)

Chris Marquette et al., Pro-Trump protesters storm Capitol during Electoral College certification, causing lockdown, Roll Call (Jan. 6, 2021)

Cheney: I Will Vote To Impeach The President, Liz Cheney Press Release (Jan. 12, 2021)

Chris Sommerfeldt, Pro-Trump rioters smeared poop in U.S. Capitol hallways during belligerent attack, NY Daily News (Jan. 7, 2021)

Christina A. Cassidy, EXPLAINER: Is Georgia's upcoming ballot 'audit' a recount?, AP (Nov. 12, 2020)

Christine Mui, Ex-Trump Chief of Staff John Kelly supports 25th Amendment to remove president, Boston Globe (Jan. 7, 2021)

Claudia Koerner and Julia Reinstein, A Capitol Police Officer On Duty During The Coup Attempt Has Died By Suicide, Buzzfeed (Jan. 11, 2021)

Committees Open Review of Insurrection at Capitol and Threats to Stop Peaceful Transition of Power, HPSCI Press Release (Jan. 16, 2021)

Congressman Kinzinger Statement on Impeachment, Congressman Adam Kinzinger Press Release (Jan. 12, 2021)

Congressman Mo Brooks Rebuts Vicious & Scurrilous Fake News Media And Socialist Democrat Attacks, Rep. Mo Brooks Press Release (Jan. 12, 2021)

Cotton Statement on Violence at Capitol, Senator Tom Cotton Press Release (Jan. 6, 2021).

Clara Hendrickson, Donald Trump called Monica Palmer after Wayne County Board of Canvassers meeting, freep (Nov. 19, 2020)

Colleen Long et al., FBI warns of plans for nationwide armed protests next week, AP (Jan. 11, 2021)

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Connor Sheets, The Radicalization of Kevin Greeson, ProPublica (Jan. 15, 2021)

Craig Mauger, President Trump: Wayne County canvassers 'harassed violently', Detroit News (Nov. 25, 2020)

Craig Timberg and Drew Harwell, Pro-Trump Forums Erupt with Violent Threats Ahead of Wednesday's Rally Against the 2020 Election, Wash. Post (Jan. 5, 2021)

Craig Timberg, Drew Harwell and Marissa J. Lang, Capitol siege was planned online. Trump supporters now planning the next one., Wash. Post (Jan. 9, 2021)

Dalton Bennett et al., 41 minutes of fear: A video timeline from inside the Capitol siege, Washington Post (Jan. 16, 2021)

Curt Devine, Donie O'Sullivan and Kara Scannell, Twitter permanently suspends Steve Bannon account after talk of beheading, CNN (Nov. 6, 2020)

Dan Barry & Sheera Frenkel, 'Be There. Will Be Wild!': Trump All but Circled the Date, N. Y. Times (Jan. 6, 2021)

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Dan Cherry, Upton: 'I will vote to impeach', The Patriot Ledger (Jan. 13, 2021)

Dan Packel, Thousands of Attorneys Join Calls for Trump's Immediate Removal, Law.com (Jan. 8, 2021)

Daniel Politi, Trump's Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany Leaves White House a Few Days Early, Slate (Jan. 16, 2021)

Daniel Dale, Fact checking Trump's barrage of lies over the weekend, CNN (Nov. 16, 2020)

Dave Boucher, Trump tweets undermine Michigan leaders; images show Chatfield drinking at Trump hotel, freep (Nov. 21, 2020)

David Choi, Trump lowers the White House flag after pressure from both Republicans and Democrats, Business Insider (Jan. 11, 2021)

David D. Kirkpatrick, Mike McIntire and Christiaan Triebert, Before the Capitol Riot, Calls for Cash and Talk of Revolution, N. Y. Times (Jan. 16, 2021)

David Landau and Rosalind Dixon, The 25th Amendment Can Remove Trump, but We Shouldn't Stop There, N, Y. Times (Jan. 7, 2021)

David Morgan, Georgia sets timeline for Trump-requested vote recount, Reuters (Nov. 23, 2020)

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David Smith et al., Donald Trump refuses to condemn white supremacists at presidential debate, The Guardian (Sep. 29, 2020)

Devlin Barrett and Matt Zapotosky, FBI report warned of 'war' at Capitol, contradicting claims there was no indication of looming violence, Wash. Post (Jan. 12, 2021)

Devlin Barrett and Spencer S. Hsu, FBI probes possible connections between extremist groups at heart of Capitol violence, Wash. Post (Jan. 18, 2021)

Devlin Barrett, Spencer S. Hsu & Matt Zapotosky, FBI focuses on whether some Capitol rioters intended to harm lawmakers or take hostages, Wash. Post (Jan.8, 2021)

Dennis Romby, How President Trump misdialed Utah Sen. Mike Lee while the Capitol was under siege, Deseret (Jan. 7, 2021).

Domenico Montanaro, Timeline: How One Of The Darkest Days In American History Unfolded, NPR (Jan. 7, 2021) ()

President Donald J. Trump, Facebook (Nov. 4, 2020)

Doug Richards, Gov. Kemp agitated by Giuliani's testimony, Trump's tweets, 11 Alive (Dec. 30, 2020)

Drew Harwell, To boost voter-fraud claims, Trump advocate Sidney Powell turns to unusual source: The longtime operator of QAnon's Internet home, Wash. Post (Dec. 1, 2020)

Ed Pilkington, Incitement: a timeline of Trump's inflammatory rhetoric before the Capitol riot, The Guardian (Jan. 7, 2021)

Education Secretary Devos Resigns, Calling President's Rhetoric 'Inflection Point', PBS (Jan. 7, 2021)

Elaine Godfrey, It was Supposed to be so Much Worse, The Atlantic (Jan. 9, 2021) ()

Eli Stokols, Trump plans big farewell ceremony as Pence does all the work, The World News (Jan. 16, 2021)

Eli Stokols, Trump retreats from his job, and Pence fills the void as 'acting' president, L. A. Times (Jan. 15, 2021)

Eliott C. McLaughlin, Before Wednesday, Insurgents Waving Confederate Flags Hadn't Been Within 6 Miles of the US Capitol, CNN (Jan. 7, 2021)

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Emmanuel Felton, Black Police Officers Describe The Racist Attacks They Faced As They Protected The Capitol, Buzzfeed (Jan. 9, 2021)

Emily Haavik, 'No credible threats' to Minnesota Capitol but security to remain high through inauguration, KARE11 (Jan. 15, 2021).

Erin Schumaker, Trump officials who have resigned in the wake of attack on Capitol, ABC News (Jan. 9, 2021)

Evan Hill et al., 'They Got a Officer!': How a Mob Dragged and Beat Police at the Capitol, N. Y. Times (Jan. 11, 2021)

Evan Hill et al., Videos Show How Rioter Was Trampled in Stampede at Capitol, N. Y. Times (Jan. 17, 2021)

Ewan Palmer, Sidney Powell's Ties to QAnon Movement Explained, Newsweek (Dec. 3, 2020)

Extremists and Mainstream Trump Supporters Plan to Protest Congressional Certification of Biden's Victory, ADL (Jan. 4, 2021)

Fandos, Schaff, and Cochrane, 'Senate Being Locked Down': Inside a Harrowing Day at the Capitol, N. Y. Times (Jan. 7, 2021)

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Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference on January 7, 2021, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (Jan. 7, 2021)

Frank O. Bowman, III, The Constitutional Case for Impeaching Donald Trump (Again), Just Security (Jan. 9, 2021)

GA Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, Facebook (Nov. 15-16, 2020)

Gabby Orr, President Mike Pence? Trump's half-joking fear bursts into view, POLITICO (Sept. 30, 2019)

George Petras, et al., Timeline: How a Trump mob stormed the US Capitol, forcing Washington into lockdown, USA TODAY (Jan. 8, 2021)

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger Press Conference Transcript: Announces Hand Recount, Rev (Nov. 11, 2020)

Georgia Senate Election Hearing Transcript, December 3, Rev (Dec. 3, 2020)

Georgia Secretary of State/Georgia Bureau of Investigation ABM Signature Audit Report (Dec. 29, 2020)

Georgia Wells, Rebecca Ballhaus and Keach Hagey, Proud Boys, Seizing Trump's Call to Washington, Helped Lead Capitol Attack, Wall Street Journal (Jan. 17, 2021)

Glenn Kessler, Fact-checking Trump's call to the Georgia secretary of state, Wash. Post. (Jan. 4, 2021)

Glenn Thrush and Maggie Haberman, Trump Gives White Supremacists an Unequivocal Boost, N. Y. Times (Aug. 15, 2017) ()

Grady McGregor and Naomi Xu Elegant, Chinese state media is already using Capitol riots in its anti-U.S. narrative, Fortune (Jan. 7, 2021)

Graham Kates, Armed capitol rallies "will continue" as planned, Boogaloo group member says, CBS News (Jan. 17, 2021).

Greg Miler, Greg Jaffe and Razzan Nakhlawi, A mob insurrection stoked by false claims of election fraud and promises of violent restoration, Wash. Post (Jan. 9, 2021).

Heidi Przybyla et al., After Meeting with Trump, Michigan lawmakers say they see nothing to overturn Biden's win, NBC (Nov. 20, 2020)

Helene Cooper et al., As the D.C. police clear the Capitol grounds, the mayor extends a public emergency, N. Y. Times (Jan. 6, 2021)

Historic First Statewide Audit of Paper Ballots Upholds Result of Presidential Race, Secretary of State Office, Georgia

House, with Some G.O.P. Support, Votes to Impeach Trump a Historic Second Time, N. Y. Times (Jan. 21, 2021)

Hugh Hewitt, Senator Ben Sasse on Impeachment and Transition, the GOP in Minority, High Hewitt (Jan. 8, 2021)

Ian Cross, Representative from Northeast Ohio one of the few Republicans to vote to impeach Trump, ABC (Jan. 13, 2021)

Ilya Somin, A Qualified Defense of Impeaching Trump Again, Reason (Jan. 6, 2021)

Ilya Somin, The First Amendment Doesn't Protect Trump Against Impeachment for his Role in Inciting the Assault on the Capitol, The Volokh Conspiracy (January 8, 2021)

In pictures: Guns drawn as lawmakers scramble amid US Capitol breach, Euronews (Jan. 7, 2021)

Interview: Jonathan Swan of AXIOS Interviews Donald Trump (Aug. 3, 2020)

Interview: Michael Savage Interviews Donald Trump on the Savage Nation Radio Show (June, 15, 2020)

Interview: Raymond Arroyo Interviews Donald Trump on EWTN's 'World Over' (June 22, 2020)

'Is This Really Happening?': The Siege of Congress, Seen From the Inside, Politico (Jan. 7, 2021)

Ishaan Tharoor, We need to reckon with Trump's lies, Wash. Post (Jan. 11, 2021)

Jack Brewster & Andrew Solender, Clyburn's Ipad, Laptop From Pelosi's Office: Items Stolen, Destroyed In Capitol Attack, Forbes (Jan. 7, 2021)

Jaclyn Diaz et al., Police Confirm Death of Officer Injured During Attack on Capitol, NPR (Jan. 7, 2021)

Jaclyn Diaz, Portland Police Charge 8 After Demonstrators Vandalize Democratic Party Offices, NPR (Jan. 21, 2021)

Jacy Marmaduke, Colorado congressman says he was trapped in House chambers as rioters tried to break doors, Coloradoan (Jan. 6, 2021)

James Brooks, Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski calls on President Trump to resign, questions her future as a Republican, Anchorage Daily News (Jan. 9, 2021)

James Gordon Meek and Catherine Sanz, 'I am not a terrorist': Retired Navy SEAL speaks after Capitol siege, ABC News (Jan. 12, 2021)

January 6, 2021 Letter from Vice President Mike Pence

Jason Hanna, Kaylee Hartung, Devon M. Sayers and Steve Almasy, Virginia governor to white nationalists: 'Go home ... shame on you', CNN (Aug. 13, 2017) ()

Jason Silverstein, Trump shares video of supporter saying "the only good Democrat is a dead Democrat", CBS (May 28, 2020)

Jason Slotkin, Suzanne Nuyen and James Doubek, 4 Stabbed, 33 Arrested After Trump Supporters, Counterprotesters Clash In D.C., NPR (Dec. 12, 2020

Jay Peters, Twitch disables Trump's account indefinitely, The Verge (Jan. 7, 2021)

Jazmine Ulloa and Steve Annear, 'It was like looking at evil': The Capitol attack through the eyes of the Massachusetts delegation, Boston Globe (Jan. 12, 2021)

Jeff Zeleny et al., Biden no longer taking Amtrak to inauguration amid security concerns, CNN (Jan. 13, 2021)

Jeff Seldin, Trump Renews 'Rigged Election' Claim Against All Evidence, VOA (Nov. 13, 2020)

Jeffrey Rosen, American is Living James Madison's Nightmare, The Atlantic (October 2018)

Jemima McEvoy, Trump Claims FBI And Justice Department May Have Helped Rig Election, Forbes (Nov. 29, 2020)

Jennifer Berry & Thomas Novelly, Nancy Mace's first 100 hours in Congress: threats, violence and challenging Trump, The Post and Courier (Jan. 7, 2021)

Jennifer Schuessler, Hundreds of Historians Join Call for Trump's Impeachment, N. Y. Times (Jan. 11, 2021)

Jennifer Steinhauer, Katie Benner, Eric Schmitt, and Helene Cooper, Leader of Proud Boys, a Far-Right Group, Is Arrested as D.C. Braces for Protests, N. Y. Times (Jan. 4, 2021)

Jeremy Duda, Attorney for Sec of State: 'Kraken' lawsuit alleges 'utterly implausible fraud', Arizona Mirror (Dec. 8, 2020)

Jessica Contrera et al., Va. man arrested at inauguration checkpoint says he was lost and didn't mean to bring gun, ammunition to D.C., Washington Post (Jan. 16, 2021)

Jeremy Duda, Trump blasts Ducey over election certification betrayed Arizonans, AZ Mirror (Nov. 30, 2020)

Jerusalem Demsas, Rudy Giuliani's bizzare legal strategy, in two clips, Vox (Dec. 3, 2020)

Jerry Dunleavy, Barr says debate over legitimacy of 2020 election 'precipitated' storming of Capitol, Wash. Examiner (Jan. 18, 2021)

Jill Colvin, Hurt Feelings, Anger Linger After Pence, Trump Clash, ABC News (Jan. 8, 2021)

Jill Colvin & Zeke Miller, Pence defies Trump, affirms Biden's win, AP (Jan. 7, 2021)

Joe Heim and Valerie Strauss, As U.S. Capitol attack unfolded, some Hill staffers remembered their school-shooting drills, Wash. Post. (Jan. 14, 2021)

John Eligon, et al, F.B.I. Urges Police Chiefs Across U.S. to Be on High Alert for Threats, N. Y. Times (Jan. 13, 2021)

John Kelly Interview with Jake Tapper Transcript, CNN (Jan. 7, 2021)

John Podhoretz, Donald Trump Should Be Impeached and Removed from Office Tomorrow, Commentary Magazine (Jan. 6, 2021)

Joint Intelligence Bulletin (Jan. 13, 2021)

Joint Statement from Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council & the Election Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Executive Committees, Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (Nov. 12, 2020)

Joint Threat Assessment Bulletin from DHS, FBI and eight other agencies

Jon Swaine, Dalton Bennett, Joyce Sohyun Lee & Meg Kelly, Video shows fatal shooting of Ashli Babbitt in the Capitol, Wash Post (Jan. 8, 2021)

Jonathan H. Adler, Yes, Congress May Impeach and Remove President Trump for Inciting Lawless Behavior at the Capitol, The Volokh Conspiracy (January 8, 2021)

Jonathan Karl and Will Steakin, Giuliani says he's working on Trump's impeachment defense, would argue voter fraud claims, ABC (Jan. 16, 2021)

Jonathan Raymond, Georgia election official says Trump is 'flat out, 100 percent, four square wrong' about consent decree, 11alive, (Nov. 17, 2020)

Jonathan Swan and Zachary Basu, Episode 1: A premeditated lie lit the fire (Jan. 16, 2021)

Jonathan Swan and Zachary Basu, Episode 3: Descent into madness ... Trump: "Sometimes you need a little crazy", Axios (Jan. 17, 2021)

Jonathan Swan, Episode 4: Trump turns on Barr, Axios (Jan. 18, 2021)

Jonathan Swan, Trump trashes McConnell to fellow Republicans, Axios (Dec. 22, 2020)

Jonathan Swan and Zachary Basu, Episode 6: Last Stand in Georgia (Jan 19, 2021)

Josh Campbell and Whitney Wild, Feds warn extremists may be emboldened to carry out additional attacks after Capitol insurrection, CNN (Jan. 14, 2021)

Josh Dawsey & Ashley Parker, Inside the remarkable rift between Donald Trump and Mike Pence, The Wash. Post (Jan. 11, 2021)

John Hendrickson, Jamie Raskin Lost His Son. Then He Fled a Mob., The Atlantic (Jan. 8, 2021)

Jonathan Swan, Trump trashes McConnell to fellow Republicans, Axios (Dec. 22, 2020).

Joint statement from Bowser, Hogan, and Northam on Planning for the 59th Presidential Inauguration, Press Release (Jan. 11, 2021).

Joseph Tanfani, Michael Berens and Ned Parker Reuters, How Trump's pied pipers rallied a faithful mob to the U.S. Capitol. St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Jan. 12, 2021)

Julia Jacobo, A visual timeline on how the attack on Capitol Hill unfolded, ABC News (Jan. 10, 2021)

Julia Jacobo, This is what Trump told supporters before many stormed Capitol Hill, ABC News (Jan. 7, 2021)

Julia Jacobo, At least 21 states activating National Guard troops in capitals to prepare for possible attacks, ABC (Jan. 18, 2021)

Julian Routh, Trump speaks to Pa. Senate committee, says he won 'by a lot', Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, (Jan. 17, 2021)

Justine Coleman, Liz Cheney blames Trump for riots: 'He lit the flame', The Hill (Jan. 6, 2021)

Kaitlain Collins et al., Trump talked out of pardoning kids and Republican lawmakers, CNN (Jan. 19, 2021)

Kate Bennett, Already shunned from polite society, Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner face new cold post-insurrection reality, CNN (Jan. 15, 2021)

Kathleen Belew and Elizabeth Neumann, Leaving Trump in office now will just encourage white nationalists, Wash. Post (Jan. 8, 2021)

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Keith E. Whittington, The conservative case for impeaching Trump now, Wash. Post (Jan. 7, 2021)

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3rd Strike Against Voter Fraud Claims Means Theyre Out After Signature Audit Finds No Fraud

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3rd Strike Against Voter Fraud Claims Means They're Out After Signature Audit Finds No Fraud

No fraudulent absentee ballots were identified during the audit.

(ATLANTA)-After a hand recount and a subsequent machine recount requested by the Trump campaign, a signature audit has again affirmed the original outcome of the November 2020 presidential race in Georgia. A signature match audit in Cobb County found "no fraudulent absentee ballots" and found that the Cobb County Elections Department had "a 99.99% accuracy rate in performing correct signature verification procedures."

"The Secretary of State's office has always been focused on calling balls and strikes in elections and, in this case, three strikes against the voter fraud claims and they're out," said Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger. "We conducted a statewide hand recount that reaffirmed the initial tally, and a machine recount at the request of the Trump campaign that also reaffirmed the original tally. This audit disproves the only credible allegations the Trump campaign had against the strength of Georgia's signature match processes."

On December 14, 2020, Secretary Raffensperger announced a signature match audit in Cobb County following credible allegations that the process was not followed in the June primaries. The Secretary of State's Office partnered with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) to conduct the audit. Of the 150,431 absentee ballots received by Cobb County elections officials during the November elections, the audit "reviewed 15,118 ABM ballot oath envelopes from randomly selected boxes," or around 10% of the total. The sample size was originally chosen to meet the 99% confidence threshold.

The audit found "no fraudulent absentee ballots" with a 99% confidence threshold. The audit found that only two ballots should have been identified by Cobb County Elections Officials for cure notification that weren't. In one case, the ballot was "mistakenly signed by the elector's spouse," and in the other, the voter "reported signing the front of the envelope only." In both cases, the identified voters filled out the ballots themselves.

The absentee ballot envelopes for the audit were "pulled from 30 randomly selected boxes of the accepted ABM ballots and one box identified as accepted Electronic Ballot Delivery ABM ballots." Each of the boxes that held the ballots were previously "secured in boxes by the Cobb County Elections Department" and were selected by a random number generator.

To conduct the audit, Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs), from GBI and SOS were instructed to "analyze and compare the known signatures, markings, and identifying information of the elector as stored in databases with the signature, markings, and identifying information on the elector's ABM ballot oath envelope." They looked for "distinctive characteristics and unique qualities ... individual attributes of the signature, mark, or other identifying information" to "make a judgment of the validity of the signature on each envelope based on the totality of the documents."

The LEOs conducting the audit were split "into 18 two-member teams identified as 'inspection teams' and two three-member teams identified as 'investigation teams.'" If the two members of the inspection team were split on whether a ballot signature was valid, a third impartial "referee" was brought in to break the tie. This only happened on six occasions.

In cases where additional review was necessary, if no signature was on the ballot, or if additional identification documents were not available, the absentee ballots were given to the investigation teams to track down more information.

The inspection teams submitted 396 envelopes to the investigation teams for comparison with additional documents or follow-up with the elector." 386 of those were accepted as valid. The remaining ten were referred for additional investigation. "All ten electors were located, positively identified, and interviewed."

The LEOs used the Cobb County Elections Database which included signature information from voter registration forms, absentee ballot applications, voter certificates, passports, certificates of naturalization, in addition to other documents.

The full report is available here:
https://sos.ga.gov/admin/uploads/Cobb%20County%20ABM%20Audit%20Report%2020201229.pdf

Georgia is recognized as a national leader in elections. It was the first state in the country to implement the trifecta of automatic voter registration, at least 16 days of early voting (which has been called the "gold standard"), and no-excuse absentee voting. Georgia continues to set records for voter turnout and election participation, seeing the largest increase in average turnout of any other state in the 2018 midterm election and record turnout in 2020, with over 1.3 million absentee by mail voters and over 3.6 million in-person voters utilizing Georgia's new, secure, paper ballot voting system.

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VIDEO DEPT.

A REPORTER'S FOOTAGE FROM INSIDE THE CAPITOL SIEGE

By The New Yorker
January 17, 2021



Luke Mogelson followed Trump supporters as they forced their way into the Senate chamber.

When Luke Mogelson attended President Donald Trump's speech on the National Mall, in Washington, D.C., on January 6th, he was prepared for the possibility that violence might erupt that day. Mogelson, a veteran war correspondent and a contributing writer at *The New Yorker*, had spent the previous ten months reporting on the radical fringe of Trump supporters, from anti-lockdown militias to fascist groups such as the Proud Boys. After Election Day, he interviewed Trump supporters who showed up at ballot-tabulation sites, and who believed the President's lies that the results had been "rigged" and his victory "stolen." At one post-election pro-Trump rally in D.C., Mogelson witnessed racist violence against Black residents of the nation's capital. At another event, he watched the host of the white-supremacist Web program "America First" declare, "Our Founding

Fathers would get in the streets, and they would take this country back by force if necessary. And that is what we must be prepared to do."

After Trump's incendiary speech, Mogelson followed the President's supporters as they forced their way into the U.S. Capitol, using his phone's camera as a reporter's notebook. What follows is a video that includes some of that raw footage. Mogelson harnessed this material while writing his panoramic, definitive report, "Among the Insurrectionists," which the magazine posted online on Friday. (It appears in print in the January 25th issue.) His prose vividly captures how the raging anger and violence of the initial breach of the Capitol was followed by an eerily quiet and surreal interlude inside the Senate chamber, where Mogelson watched people rummaging through desks and posing for photographs. Although the footage was not originally intended for publication, it documents a historic event and serves as a visceral complement to Mogelson's probing, illuminating report.

Click here to read "Among the Insurrectionists."

READ MORE ABOUT THE ATTACK ON THE CAPITOL

- Donald Trump, the Inciter-in-Chief.
- He must be held accountable.
- An Air Force combat veteran was part of the mob in the Senate.
- The invaders enjoyed the privilege of not being taken seriously.
- The crisis of the Republican Party has only begun.
- A Pelosi staffer recounts the breach.
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More: Donald Trump Capitol Hill Trump-Biden Transition

Trump promoted N.M. official's comment that 'the only good Democrat is a dead Democrat.' Now the man is arrested in the Capitol riot.

washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/01/18/trump-promoted-his-comment-that-only-good-democrat-is-dead-democrat-now-he-is-arrested-storming-capitol/

By Aaron Blake January 18, 2021



President Trump's culpability for the attempted insurrection at the U.S. Capitol two weeks ago will be judged by U.S. senators in a looming impeachment trial — and possibly by the court system after he leaves the presidency.

Now a man with a personal connection to Trump — and whose violent rhetoric Trump promoted to the world — has been arrested in the riot.

Otero County, N.M., Commissioner Couy Griffin was arrested Sunday for illegally entering the Capitol on Jan. 6. Griffin, the head of a group called Cowboys for Trump, claims he got caught up with the crowd and didn't actually enter the building, but the affidavit says video on his personal Facebook page showed him in restricted areas.

Griffin also pledged to return to Washington with guns for President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration Wednesday, and he alluded to the prospect of violence and another incursion into the offices of lawmakers. According to the affidavit, he said in a video posted after the Jan. 6 riot:

> ... We could have a 2nd Amendment rally on those same steps that we had that rally yesterday. You know, and if we do, then it's gonna be a sad day, because there's gonna be blood running out of that building. But at the end of the day, you mark my word, we will plant our flag on the desk of Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer and Donald J. Trump if it boils down to it.

It's not the first time Griffin has employed such violent rhetoric. He did so in May as well. And at the time, his message was promoted by Trump on Twitter.

In the video, Griffin said, "The only good Democrat is a dead Democrat." He qualified in the video that he was only speaking metaphorically about politics.

Trump promoted the video by saying, "Thank you Cowboys. See you in New Mexico!" (Twitter suspended both Trump's and the Cowboys for Trump accounts this month.)

But while Griffin qualified his comments in the video, he later indicated to the Daily Beast that he wasn't speaking entirely figuratively. He suggested Democratic governors who locked down their states amid the coronavirus pandemic could be guilty of treason and might face the death penalty.

"You get to pick your poison: You either go before a firing squad, or you get the end of the rope," Griffin said.

He was also asked whether anti-lockdown activists like him might need to resort to violence to get their way, and he suggested they might.

"I'll tell you what, partner, as far as I'm concerned, there's not an option that's not on the table," Griffin said.

Trump's connection to Griffin isn't limited to the retweet. Three months earlier, Griffin had posted photos from an audience with Trump in the Oval Office to the Cowboys for Trump page on Facebook.

Trump also spoke with Griffin by phone a year earlier, after Cowboys for Trump organized a week-long horseback ride through Maryland to Washington to highlight border security. It wasn't just a brief hello; according to Griffin, the two spoke for 30 minutes. Griffin also said Trump asked for his personal phone number.

When Griffin told Trump his group planned to return to Washington that summer, Griffin said Trump talked about welcoming them onto the White House grounds.

"He said, 'Couy, that sounds amazing,' ... 'If you will do that, then whenever you get here, there's 20 acres on the South Lawn and the gate will be open to you at the White House where you can ride your horses right in,' " Griffin said. "Then he jokingly said that he might have to get on my horse whenever I get there."

Griffin is hardly the only fringe figure in the conservative movement whom Trump has engaged with and promoted in ways presidents generally avoid. But he's now one who is accused of actively taking part in an attempted insurrection at the U.S. Capitol — and who spoke in violent terms about a redux this week. The type of rhetoric he used surrounding his arrest echoes the message Trump decided to promote less than a year ago.

Just a day after the May retweet, Trump also tweeted of racial justice protesters, "When the looting starts, the shooting starts" — a phrase with an ugly history in American politics.)

Trump's critics argue Trump incited the scenes we saw at the Capitol. They have significant evidence, in that some of those who participated and were arrested at least cited a belief that they were indeed acting at Trump's request. Now, they can draw a more direct through-line from Trump's promotion of violent rhetoric to the siege on the Capitol.

Democracy Dies in Darkness

National Security Foreign Policy Justice Military

National Security

Timeline: How law enforcement and government officials failed to head off the U.S. Capitol attack



Thousands of Trump supporters march toward the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. (Michael Robinson Chavez/The Washington Post)

By **Aaron C. Davis**

Jan. 16, 2021

enforcement and city officials braced for potential violence in the nation's capital.

But despite numerous internal briefings, intelligence warnings and planning meetings, officials failed to take sufficient action to fend off the attacks — with deadly consequences. Once rioters began to move en masse to the Capitol, it was too late.

Too few Capitol Police officers stood in their way, and there was no chance to summon enough backup quickly enough to keep out the violent mob. The riot unleashed hours of unchecked aggression and close calls as marauders came within 60 seconds of encountering Vice President Pence, nearly trapped lawmakers, and looted and vandalized the seat of U.S. democracy for the first time since British forces burned the Capitol on Aug. 24, 1814. Five people died in the violence and dozens of police officers were injured.

Scores of federal criminal investigations have been opened. The inspectors general at four federal agencies and the Capitol Police Board have launched investigations into the preparedness and response to the attack, and numerous congressional inquiries are expected.

This reconstruction of the key moments leading up the Capitol siege and the law enforcement response that day is based on video footage, public documents and the accounts of members of Congress, congressional aides and officials with the Capitol Police, D.C. government, D.C. police, Defense Department, FBI and D.C. government. It will update with new information.

Filter by Person

All

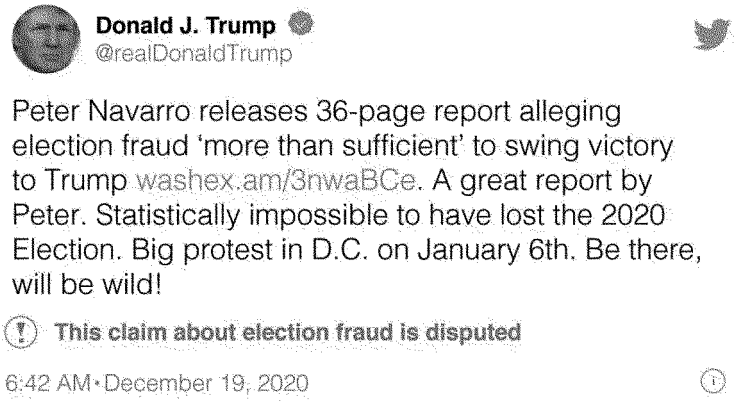
Filter by Agency

All

Democracy Dies in Darkness

PRESIDENT TRUMP

Trump encourages supporters to converge on D.C. on Jan. 6, the day Congress is to take the final step of counting electoral college votes and formally declare Joe Biden the next president. In one of a series of tweets, Trump writes: "Statistically impossible to have lost the 2020 Election. Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!"



This tweet is a re-creation. The original tweet is not available after President Trump was banned from the social network.

[The report Trump references in his tweet might be the most embarrassing document created by a White House staffer]

Dec. 21

MURIEL E. BOWSER, D.C. MAYOR

Prompted in part by Trump's tweets, D.C.'s outgoing police chief briefs Bowser and the department begins crafting a security plan. Two previous gatherings of Trump supporters after the election had already turned violent, and D.C. police fear that with Trump's encouragement, Jan. 6 could be the worst yet.

[Proud Boys sparked clashes during pro-Trump rally, D.C. says]

Late December

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS • PAUL IRVING, HOUSE SERGEANT AT ARMS • MICHAEL STENGER, SENATE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

In the two weeks leading up to Jan. 6, staffers in the offices of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) say they meet repeatedly with Stenger and Irving, both former assistant directors of the Secret Service, and are told security preparations for Jan. 6 are under control.

Dec. 29

Two D.C. officials on the call said that given the violence at the previous two Trump rallies, the sense was that all parties should prepare for violence again.

Dec. 31

STEVEN SUND, CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF • MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) speaks with Sund on the morning of New Year's Eve. She recalls asking him about staffing and whether Capitol Police were gathering intelligence to know what percentage of the crowd might have violent intentions. Waters said Sund told her he had a plan for keeping protesters far from the building. They would be corralled in a grassy area east of the Capitol. If counterprotesters showed up, as they had during two previous pro-Trump rallies in D.C. since the election, his officers would form a line between the two groups. As a precaution for lawmakers, Capitol security would also direct all Members of Congress and their staffers to move around using the network of underground tunnels that connect the Capitol with House and Senate office buildings. Waters recalled asking Sund how big the gathering would be. Sund, she said, didn't have a clear answer. She hung up the phone at her home in D.C. thinking: "They don't know who's coming. They don't know whether any of these are violent groups." Sund recalls the conversation differently, saying Waters inquired about the nature of the groups getting permits to demonstrate, but didn't ask broadly about intelligence surrounding the protest.

Democracy Dies in Darkness

MURIEL E. BOWSER, D.C. MAYOR • CHRISTOPHER RODRIGUEZ, D.C. HOMELAND SECURITY DIRECTOR • MAJ. GEN. WILLIAM J. WALKER, D.C. NATIONAL GUARD COMMANDER

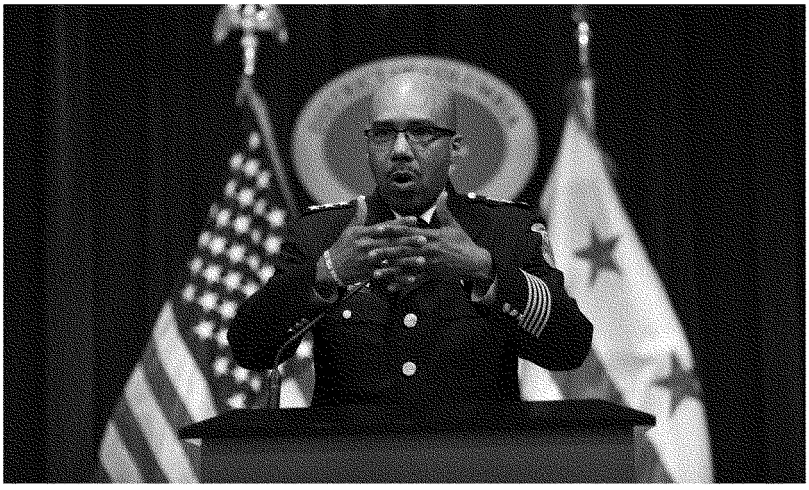
Bowser decides to seek help from the D.C. National Guard, overcoming concerns among some aides about a repeat of the past June, when city officials say the Pentagon countermanded a plan to have the Guard staff traffic control points around mass protests against police abuse. Instead, D.C. officials said, they watched as soldiers were diverted to protect the White House. The mayor and Rodriguez, the city's homeland security director, send a letter to Walker requesting guardsmen to again staff roadblocks, freeing D.C. police to respond to more urgent needs if they arise. Because D.C. is not a state, the president has ultimate authority over the D.C. Guard, and the request gets forwarded to the Pentagon. *[How Trump amassed a red-state army in D.C. -- and could do so again]*

Jan. 2, 2021

ROBERT J. CONTEE III, ACTING D.C. POLICE CHIEF • MURIEL E. BOWSER, D.C. MAYOR

Contee is sworn in as acting D.C. police chief. His first briefing with Bowser is about the Trump rally, just days away. Some advisers want Bowser to declare a curfew the night of Jan. 6. Bowser says she wants to keep a curfew as an option but does not want to declare one preemptively. City officials decide to wait and see how arriving crowds behave the night ahead of the rally.

Democracy Dies in Darkness



Acting D.C. police chief Robert J. Contee III assumed his post days before the Trump rally. (Robb Hill for The Washington Post)

[Expected Jan. 6 protests multiply as Trump continues to call supporters to Washington]

Jan. 2

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Miller and Milley confer about D.C.'s request to activate the Guard, according to a timeline later released by the Defense Department. *[Document: Planning and execution efforts of the Department of Defense to address the Violent Attack at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021]*

Jan. 3

MURIEL E. BOWSER, D.C. MAYOR

Still awaiting a reply from the Guard, Bowser announces the city's plan for the expected protests on Jan. 6. She says a wide swath of downtown will close to vehicle traffic beginning the morning of Jan. 5. Concerned about online posts and news reports suggesting Trump supporters will bring weapons, she instructs police officers to begin posting signs that guns cannot be carried into the District. She works with clergy to discourage counterprotests. Bowser asks all residents and workers from around the region to stay away from downtown and "not to engage with demonstrators who come to our city seeking confrontation." *[Bowser warns D.C. residents to stay away when Trump supporters amass downtown Wednesday]*

Jan. 3

CHRISTOPHER C. MILLER, ACTING DEFENSE SECRETARY • GEN. MARK A. MILLEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF • PRESIDENT TRUMP

according to the Defense Department timeline.

Jan. 3

An internal Capitol Police intelligence report warns of a violent scenario in which "Congress itself" could be the target of angry Trump supporters on Jan. 6. The 12-page report says that the president's backers could feel a "sense of desperation and disappointment" about the election results that "may lead to more of an incentive to become violent." It does not appear to have been shared widely with other law enforcement agencies, including the FBI.

[Capitol Police intelligence report warned three days before attack that 'Congress itself' could be targeted]

Jan. 3

In an email exchange, a Defense Department official asks for confirmation from a colleague that U.S. Capitol Police are making "no requests for DoD support?" The colleague replies that a Capitol Police official — at least two notches below the chief — had confirmed that the department was not seeking such help.

Jan. 4

The Pentagon communicates to Bowser that the Guard will be activated, but with significant restrictions. D.C. officials are told no Humvees or

they specifically asked for a limited, unarmed role for the military following concerns about the vast National Guard force assembled in Washington in June. Soldiers will be driven to their deployment positions, mostly manning traffic barricades and Metro stations, via shuttle buses. D.C. guardsmen will also receive no ammunition or riot gear, and will be ordered to interact with protesters only if necessary for self-defense, according to D.C. and military officials familiar with the orders. In all, the Pentagon approves activation of 340 members of the Guard: 90 are slated for traffic control; 48 for shifts at Metro stations; 20 to monitor for weapons of mass destruction; and 52 for command and control.

[Pentagon placed limits on D.C. Guard ahead of pro-Trump protests due to narrow mission]

Jan. 4

Andrews, about 14 miles from the Capitol, on the day of the protests. Defense officials later say it is meant to bolster forces working with D.C. police on traffic assignments, not for other operations.

Jan. 4

ROBERT J. CONTEE III, ACTING D.C. POLICE CHIEF • KARL RACINE, D.C. ATTORNEY GENERAL • CHRISTOPHER RODRIGUEZ, D.C. HOMELAND SECURITY DIRECTOR

Contee, Rodriguez and Racine brief members of the D.C. Council about the upcoming protests. In addition to the size of the crowd, some D.C. lawmakers have another worry: whether a chaotic event could provide an opening for Trump to follow through on a threat made in June by then-Attorney General William P. Barr to seize control of the D.C. police force, or to invoke the Insurrection Act, bringing active-duty military into the nation's capital. Trump's former national security adviser Michael Flynn has been urging Trump to declare martial law and use the military to carry out a new election in states where he disputes the results.

[Last week, the D.C. Council feared a Trump police takeover. Now, inauguration looms.]

Jan. 4

The National Park Service, the federal agency in charge of land around the National Mall, authorizes the groups organizing the Jan. 6 rally to

* *

[See permit]

Jan. 4

STEVEN SUND, CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF • PAUL IRVING, HOUSE SERGEANT AT ARMS • MICHAEL STENGER, SENATE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Sund says he begins growing concerned about the swelling number of expected protesters, he later recounts in an interview with The Washington Post. Sund says that in conversations with his superiors — Irving and Stenger — he asks for permission to deputize National Guard soldiers and place them on standby ahead of the protest. In the interview, Sund said that action would have required Irving and Stenger to agree to an emergency declaration of sorts. Both were reluctant, according to Sund. Irving says he is uncomfortable with the "optics" of Guard soldiers stationed around the Capitol. Stenger urges Sund to informally seek out his Guard contacts, asking them to "lean forward" and be on alert in case Capitol Police need help. Irving has not responded to requests for comment; Stenger has declined to comment.

Jan. 4, 6:30 p.m.

STEVEN SUND, CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF • MAJ. GEN. WILLIAM J. WALKER, D.C. NATIONAL GUARD COMMANDER

Sund said he followed Stenger's suggestion, calling Gen. Walker and asking him how quickly he could provide help on the day of the protest. According to Sund, Walker says he could have 125 soldiers available

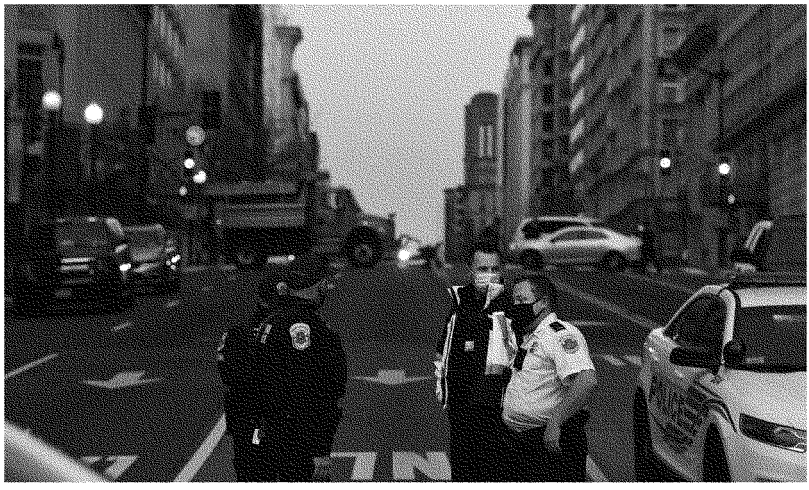
of the Guard. In an interview, Walker acknowledged receiving a call from Sund: "We did talk," he said, "but we never got an official request that has to go up the chain of command. We didn't get that until the day of, and the Capitol already was under duress."

Jan. 5

MURIEL E. BOWSER, D.C. MAYOR

Bowser sends a letter to acting attorney general Jeffrey Rosen, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy and acting defense secretary Christopher C. Miller, saying that unless members of federal law enforcement are coordinating with D.C. police, she "discourages" them from patrolling D.C. streets on the day of the protest. The letter is another sign of the scars that remain from police protests the previous summer, when then-Attorney General William P. Barr deployed federal law enforcement — including U.S. Marshals and prison riot teams with no identifying badge numbers — that used chemical irritants to clear mostly peaceful protesters from streets around Lafayette Square. Bowser does not request additional forces from the Defense Department in the letter, and states in it that the Metropolitan Police Department is "prepared for this week's First Amendment activities."

Democracy Dies in Darkness



D.C. officials were wary of a heavy federal presence in the District. (Matt McClain/The Washington Post)

[Read Bowser's letter]

Jan. 5, 10 a.m.

PAUL IRVING, HOUSE SERGEANT AT ARMS ● STEVEN SUND, CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF ● MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

discuss preparations. Lofgren recalls that the two report that everything is "all lined up." She says later that Sund did not relay that he had been rebuffed by Irving and Stenger on his request for the National Guard. "He didn't tell me he needed help," Lofgren says. Sund acknowledges as much later to The Post, saying he ultimately felt comfortable with the plan he had in place.

Jan. 5, afternoon

An explicit warning from an FBI office in Virginia reaches the FBI Field Office in Washington. It states that extremists from at least four states are preparing to travel to Washington to commit violence and "war," according to an internal document reviewed by The Post. Agents write that in an online thread they were monitoring, they observed this message: "Congress needs to hear glass breaking, doors being kicked in, and blood from their BLM and Pantifa slave soldiers being spilled. Get violent. Stop calling this a march, or rally, or a protest. Go there ready for war. We get our President or we die. NOTHING else will achieve this goal."

[FBI report warned of 'war' at Capitol, contradicting claims there was no indication of looming violence]

Jan. 5, within 40 minutes

The FBI document is briefed to officials in a command post, and then shared with the agency's joint terrorism task force, which includes local

much the FBI or anyone else could do with the information, because they did not know who was making the statements online, and the threat wasn't directed at any specific lawmaker or person. It was raw intelligence, and as such did not prompt officials to change their thinking or planning about the next day, according to people familiar with the matter. Although it was shared with the task force, that is not the same thing as telling senior officials at those agencies. In practice, information considered important or urgent is often passed through follow-up phone calls or conversations. Senior officials at other agencies involved in preparing for Jan. 6, including Sund, the Capitol Police chief, and Contee, the acting D.C. police chief, say they never receive the warning.

Jan. 5, 4 p.m.

STEVEN SUND, CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF • PAUL IRVING, HOUSE SERGEANT AT ARMS • MICHAEL STENGER, SENATE SERGEANT AT ARMS • MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), whose committee has financial oversight of Capitol Police, holds a conference call with Sund, Irving and Stenger. Like Lofgren, he too later says the Capitol's top security officials assure him "every precaution was being taken" for the next day. Sund does not dispute this.

Jan. 6, 7 a.m.

Police officers report to work. Ryan says he's told that represents the force's full strength, except for officers who worked the night shift and are allowed to go home. A former Capitol Police official says that's a deviation from as recently as 2016, when hundreds of officers who worked the night shift would routinely be required to stay on through the day to help staff a State of the Union address or other major security event.

Jan. 6, 11:15 a.m.

Trump has not yet taken the stage near the White House, more than a mile and a half away, but a group of 200 to 300 protesters arrive at the Capitol reflecting pool area, near the west side of the building, video captured by a D.C. police camera shows.

Jan. 6, 11:39 a.m.

PRESIDENT TRUMP

to the stage, erected south of the White House.

[White House pool report]

Jan. 6, 11:57 a.m.

PRESIDENT TRUMP

Trump begins speaking and quickly starts recounting baseless conspiracy theories that the November election results were manipulated. "They rigged an election, they rigged it like they've never rigged an election before," Trump says. "All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by emboldened radical-left Democrats. ... We will never give up. We will never concede. It doesn't happen. You don't concede when there's theft involved."



Jan. 6, 12:45 p.m.

With Trump still speaking, the D.C. police camera captures what looks like a wall of people suddenly arriving about a block west of the Capitol.

Jan. 6, at about the same time

Officers from the U.S. Capitol Police, along with agents from the FBI and ATF, are dispatched to the offices of the Republican National Committee, southwest of the Capitol, for a report of a pipe bomb outside the building.

Jan. 6, 12:49 p.m.

Trump supporters at the front of the large group amassing near the Capitol reflecting pool pick up a metal barrier and push it into two officers. A crowd begins to press onto the restricted Capitol grounds.

Jan. 6, 12:59 p.m.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE

Pence enters the House Chamber to preside over the counting of electoral votes.

Jan. 6, around 1 p.m.

STEVEN SUND, CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF • ROBERT J. CONTEE III, ACTING D.C. POLICE CHIEF

"I realized at 1 p.m., things aren't going well," Sund later tells The Post. "I'm watching my people getting slammed." Sund requests backup from Contee. D.C. police deploy two heavily armored tactical teams. They arrive within 13 minutes, identifiable by their bright yellow vests.

Jan. 6, 1:09 p.m.

STEVEN SUND, CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF • PAUL IRVING, HOUSE SERGEANT AT ARMS • MICHAEL STENGER, SENATE SERGEANT AT ARMS

Sund contacts Irving and Stenger, he later says, saying he needs to declare an emergency because of the outer perimeter barricades being breached. He says he asks for authorization to call in the National Guard and although Irving and Stenger are the Capitol's two top security officials, Sund says he is told the request must be "run up the chain" for approval.

Democracy Dies in Darkness



Capitol Police officers confer as the crowd around the complex grows. (Michael S. Williamson/The Washington Post)

[Outgoing Capitol Police chief: House, Senate security officials hamstrung efforts to call in National Guard]

Jan. 6, 1:10 p.m.

PRESIDENT TRUMP

Nearing the end of his speech, Trump says "we're going to walk down" to the Capitol, where Republicans must "fight." Trump says he will be with the crowd. "We're going to the Capitol," he says. "We're going to try and give them the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country."

[Trump issued a call to arms. Then he urged his followers 'to remember this day forever!']

About the time that D.C. police begin arriving, a second explosive device is reported at the Democratic National Committee headquarters, a block south of the Capitol. The bomb threats draw away some Capitol Police resources as authorities begin evacuating the two House office buildings nearby.

Jan. 6, before 1:30 p.m.

PAUL IRVING, HOUSE SERGEANT AT ARMS • MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

On the House floor, Lofgren hears from staff that a mass of protesters have pushed their way onto the iconic Capitol steps on the west side of the building. Through second-story windows, Lofgren's aides can see that a ragtag group of rioters have also begun to climb atop the risers and platforms erected for the inauguration. Lofgren and her staff try to phone Sund, but initially cannot reach him. In a conversation a short time later on the House floor, Lofgren recounts that Irving has assured her things would be fine. Protesters would be kept outside. The doors were all locked, he tells her. "Nobody can get in," Irving says.

Jan. 6, by 1:30 p.m.

PAUL IRVING, HOUSE SERGEANT AT ARMS • MICHAEL STENGER, SENATE SERGEANT AT ARMS • MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Alarmed by the deteriorating security situation outside, senior aides to McConnell and Schumer begin crowding into Stenger's office a floor below the chambers. Irving sits at a desk placing calls to a law

people in the room. Capitol police had not coordinated with the regional police departments before this moment, and as he hangs up, Irving tells those in the room it will take an hour or two for any officers to arrive. A Democratic aide and a Republican aide looked at each other in surprise. Irving also begins to talk about bringing in the National Guard.

[Inside the Capitol siege: How barricaded lawmakers and aides sounded urgent pleas for help as police lost control]

Jan. 6, 1:34 p.m.

MURIEL E. BOWSER, D.C. MAYOR • RYAN MCCARTHY, SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

Bowser speaks by phone with McCarthy to request additional Guard forces, according to the mayor's office and the Defense Department timeline. McCarthy later tells The Post that it was challenging to understand what was needed and how exactly the Defense Department could help. "No one could articulate what was really going on," he said.

Jan. 6, between 1:39 p.m. and 1:49 p.m.

STEVEN SUND, CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF • MAJ. GEN. WILLIAM J. WALKER, D.C. NATIONAL GUARD COMMANDER

Sund, who has still not heard back from the sergeant-at-arms about authorizing the Guard, is losing patience, he says. Sund calls Walker, asking the general to ready whatever troops he can. The Defense Department timeline places this call 10 minutes later, and describes Sund as seeking "immediate" assistance. Walker said he forwarded the request to the Pentagon. "There was no confusion. I just submitted the request that I received and submitted it up the channel — the verbal request."

Jan. 6, 1:50 p.m.

The commander of D.C. police forces at the Capitol declares a "riot."

[How battered D.C. police made a stand against the Capitol mob]

Jan. 6, 1:53 p.m.

A D.C. police radio transmission relays news of the riot and says police lines have been breached.

Jan. 6, 1:59 p.m.

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Jan. 6, 2:10 p.m.

STEVEN SUND, CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF • PAUL IRVING, HOUSE SERGEANT AT ARMS • MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Text and email alerts go out to all congressional staff, warning those inside to stay away from windows and those outside to seek cover: "All buildings within the Capitol complex due to an external security threat located on the West Front: no entry or exit is permitted at this time." Irving calls Sund and gives approval to request the National Guard, Sund says.

Jan. 6, 2:11 p.m.

Rioters use lumber and a police shield to break through a window, video footage shows. About a minute later, a person can be seen crossing the sill. Several more immediately follow into the building.

Democracy Dies in Darkness



Trump supporters pushed past police into the Capitol. (Erin Scott/Bloomberg)

Jan. 6, 2:13 p.m.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE • MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

A floor above the break-in, Secret Service agents rush Pence from the Senate chamber to a nearby office. Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) takes the gavel and seconds later, gavels the Senate to recess.

Jan. 6, 2:14 p.m.

About a minute after Pence is secured in the office, rioters reach the precipice of the Senate chamber, where lawmakers are still inside. Officer Eugene Goodman briefly holds off a group of rioters at the top of

[How the rioters who stormed the Capitol came dangerously close to Pence]

Jan. 6, 2:16 p.m.

At the other end of the building, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, second in line to the presidency, presides from the dais for another few minutes before she, too, is rushed from the chamber.

Jan. 6, 2:18 p.m.

Another text alert goes out to Capitol staff: "Due to security threat inside: immediately, move inside your office, take emergency equipment, lock the doors, take shelter."

Jan. 6, around 2:20 p.m.

CONGRESSIONAL AIDES • DAVID BOWDICH, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE FBI

Barricaded inside a Senate office with colleague, an adviser to McConnell calls a former law firm colleague who had just left the Justice Department: Will Levi, who had served as Barr's chief of staff. Speaking in a whisper, the McConnell aide says the situation is dire: If backup did not arrive soon, people could die. From his home, Levi immediately calls FBI Deputy Director David Bowdich, who was in the command center in the FBI's Washington Field Office. Capitol Police had lost control of the building, Levi told Bowdich. Bowdich dispatched the first of three

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Jan. 6, 2:26 p.m.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Despite the warnings to take shelter, lawmakers remain in the House chamber in a chaotic scene. They gavel back into session for three minutes and then finally recess at 2:29 p.m.

Jan. 6, about 2:30 p.m.

STEVEN SUND, CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF • ROBERT J. CONTEE III, ACTING D.C. POLICE CHIEF • MURIEL E. BOWSER, D.C. MAYOR • CHRISTOPHER RODRIGUEZ, D.C. HOMELAND SECURITY DIRECTOR

In a conference call with city and military officials, Sund again makes an urgent request for the National Guard. Sund later says the Army staff secretary, Lt. Gen. Walter E. Piatt, replies that he is concerned about the "visual" of the National Guard standing a police line with the Capitol in the background. D.C. officials say they also recall Piatt expressing that

plan before dispatching to the scene.

[Pentagon faces scrutiny over response to Capitol riot]

Jan. 6, 2:30 p.m.

RYAN MCCARTHY, SECRETARY OF THE ARMY • CHRISTOPHER C. MILLER, ACTING DEFENSE SECRETARY • GEN. MARK A. MILLEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

While lawmakers are evacuating from the Senate floor to an underground tunnel, McCarthy, Miller and Milley meet to discuss the requests to activate more National Guard resources. McCarthy said that he and Gen. James McConville, the chief of staff of the Army, "ran down the hallway" at the Pentagon to Miller's office and were "trying to get a handle on this."

Jan. 6, 2:33 p.m.

More than 30 minutes after the mob has breached the Capitol, a broadcast on the emergency management agency channel in D.C. requests that all law enforcement officers in the city respond to the Capitol.

Jan. 6, 2:38 p.m.

CONGRESSIONAL AIDES • CAPITOL POLICE OFFICERS

Capitol Police and staffers barricade the main entrance leading onto the House floor as lawmakers continue evacuating for four more minutes.

Democracy Dies in Darkness



Lawmakers and staff rush to clear the chamber. (Bill O'leary/The Washington Post)

Jan. 6, 2:42 p.m.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Jan. 6, 2:44 p.m.

ASHLI BABBIT

A Capitol Police officer fires at Babbitt as she is climbing through a broken window into the Speaker's Lobby, a corridor beside the House Chamber.

[Ashli Babbitt was shot during chaotic moments in the Capitol]

Jan. 6, 2:45 p.m.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

A large group of senators who evacuated through an underground tunnel reach a secure location in a congressional office building.

Jan. 6, 2:49 p.m.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Jan. 6, between 2 and 3 p.m.

Members of a specially trained D.C. police civil disturbance unit commandeer a WMATA bus and have the driver take them as close to the Capitol as possible to join in the fray. Police officers from surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia begin arriving. Prince George's County police are instructed to try to gain control of the north side of the west terrace. Montgomery and Arlington county officers press up a staircase on the west side. Virginia state police begin battling with rioters under the mid-level terrace on the west side. Some of the units from Maryland and Virginia arrive more quickly than Capitol police had expected because D.C. police had coordinated in advance to have them on standby. When Capitol police asked D.C. for help at 1 p.m., D.C. activated its plans with regional forces.

Jan. 6, 2:52 p.m.

The first FBI SWAT teams enter the Capitol.

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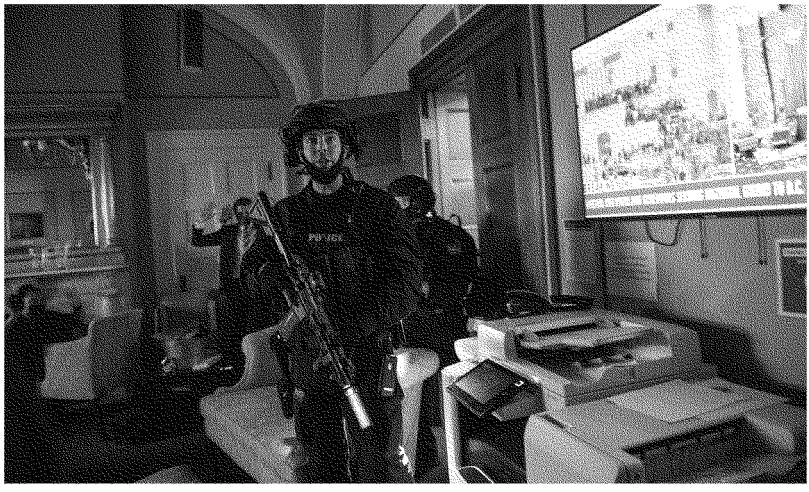

Police clear and evacuate the building. (Amanda Voisard for The Washington Post)

Jan. 6, 3 p.m.

RYAN MCCARTHY, SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

McCarthy directs the D.C. Guard to prepare to move available guardsmen from the D.C. Armory to the Capitol. The D.C. Guard prepares to move 150 personnel. McCarthy later says that many guardsmen were on assignment in other locations in the city, without protective equipment. "We moved as fast as we could from a cold start, not configured to take a reaction," McCarthy said.

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Jan. 6, 3:04 p.m.

CHRISTOPHER C. MILLER, ACTING DEFENSE SECRETARY

Miller authorizes full activation of the 1,100 members of the D.C. National Guard.

Jan. 6, 3:30 p.m.

D.C. POLICE OFFICER MICHAEL FANONE

While some police have retreated, overwhelmed by the mob, others are fighting the attackers. Fanone, a D.C. officer, is surrounded and beaten outside the Capitol's west terrace doors, which open to an area under the Rotunda. Cmdr. Ramey Kyle, who was in the tunnel-like entrance with Fanone, said that before the beating, "We believed at the time that we were the only door in jeopardy of being breached."

Jan. 6, late afternoon

Police clear the courtyard area on the west side of the Capitol and then try to begin pushing rioters down the west stairs. It takes as much as 15 minutes to clear a single step.

About 150 members of the D.C. National Guard arrive at the Capitol to begin support operations.

Jan. 6, 6 p.m.

D.C. begins a citywide curfew as skirmishes between rioters and police continue along First Street. D.C. police begin making curfew arrests. The first rioter arrested is found to have a loaded firearm, D.C. police say.

Jan. 6, 6:14 p.m.

Police and National Guard establish a perimeter on the west side of the Capitol.



Democracy Dies in Darkness

Jan. 6, 7:09 p.m.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ● CONGRESSIONAL AIDES

Senators exit their secure location with congressional staffers who had secured the electoral college votes, carrying them back to the Capitol to continue counting.

Jan. 6, 8:06 p.m.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

After the Capitol Police declare the building secure, the Senate gavels back into session at 8:06 p.m., followed by the House at 9:02 p.m.

Democracy Dies in Darkness



Police clear people from the U.S. Capitol grounds before curfew on Jan. 6. (Michael S. Williamson/The Washington Post)

Carol D. Leonnig, Paul Kane, Matt Zapotosky, Devlin Barrett, Rosalind S. Helderman, Peter Hermann, Paul Sonne, Dan Lamothe, Karoun Demirjian, Missy Ryan, Emma Brown, Michael Brice-Saddler, Julie Zauzmer, Joyce Sohyun Lee, Meg Kelly, Dalton Bennett, Elyse Samuels, Sarah Cahlan and Jon Swaine contributed to this report.

Design and development by Leo Domínguez and Chiqui Esteban. Project editing by Matea Gold. Photo editing by Karly Domb Sadof.

Democracy Dies in Darkness

winning the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting in 2018.

More from The Post

House impeaches Trump with 10 Republicans joining, but Senate plans unclear

The House broke new ground by impeaching a president for a second time, a week before he leaves office, indicting President Trump for inciting a riot with false claims of a stolen election that led to the storming of the Capitol and five deaths.



How pro-Trump insurrectionists broke into the U.S. Capitol

Hundreds of rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol building Wednesday as Congress met to certify electoral college votes for President-elect Joe Biden. The chaotic scene unfolded on a day when thousands of President Trump's supporters gathered in Washington to protest the outcome of the 2020 election.



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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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5 Pence is helping Biden make the transition more normal. But their cooperation has risks for each.

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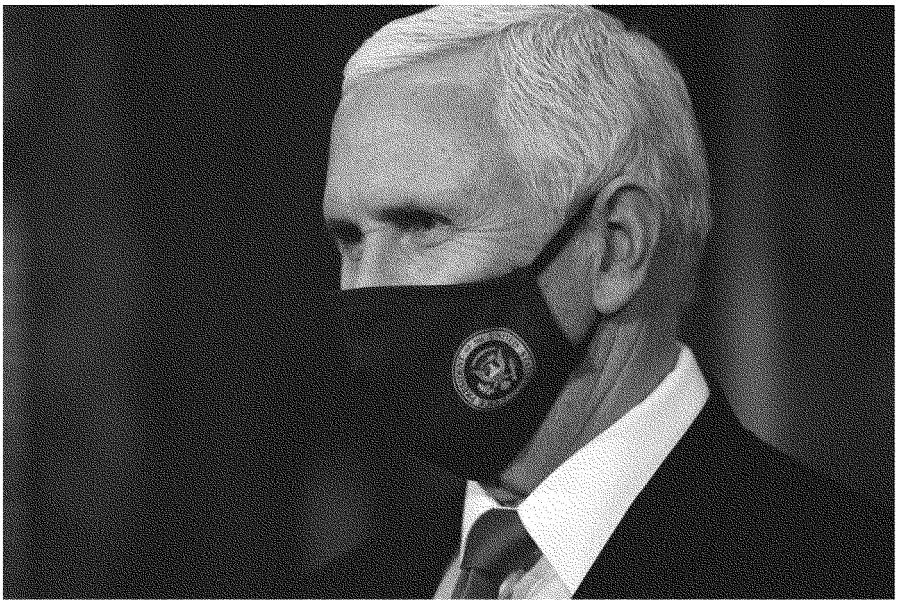
Read Pence's full letter saying he can't claim 'unilateral authority' to reject electoral votes

pbs.org/newshour/politics/read-pences-full-letter-saying-he-cant-claim-unilateral-authority-to-reject-electoral-votes

Associated Press January 6, 2021



WASHINGTON (AP) — Defying President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence said Wednesday that he does not have the power to discard electoral votes that will make Democrat Joe Biden the next president on Jan. 20.

Pence said in a statement issued minutes before he was to begin presiding over a joint session of Congress to count those votes that it was "my considered judgement that my oath to support and defend the Constitution constrains me from claiming unilateral authority to determine which electoral votes should be counted and which should not."

In the days before the joint session, Trump has pressured his vice president to toss electors from battleground states that voted for Biden to overturn the will of voters in a desperate and futile bid to undo President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the November election.

"If Mike Pence does the right thing we win the election," Trump told thousands of supporters who rallied Wednesday on the Ellipse, just south of the White House, an hour before the count in Congress was to begin.

"All Vice President Pence has to do is send it back to the states to recertify and we become president and you are the happiest people," Trump said, repeating a falsehood he has been promoting leading up to the congressional session.

Trump repeatedly pressured Pence to act during his more than 75-minute speech to supporters. "Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us," Trump said, "and if he doesn't, it's a sad day for our country."

Shortly before the 1 p.m. start of the joint session and even as Trump continued his verbal haranguing, Pence made clear in a three-page letter that he would follow the Constitution, not the commander in chief. While Trump was speaking, Pence's motorcade carried him through a heavily-secured Washington toward the Capitol, where thousands of Trump supporters were marching.

Pence has no unilateral power under the Constitution and congressional rules that govern the count. It is up to the House and Senate to voice objections, and states' electors were chosen in accordance with state law, not fraudulently.

Beginning at 1 p.m., Pence began to open the certificates of the electoral votes from each state and present them to the appointed "tellers" from the House and Senate in alphabetical order. At the end of the count, Pence, seated on the House of Representatives' rostrum, has the task of announcing who has won the majority of votes for both president and vice president.

Despite his largely ceremonial assignment, Pence has faced intense pressure from the president and legions of supporters who want the vice president to use the moment to overturn the will of the voters in a handful of battleground states.

Read Vice President Mike Pence's full statement on the electoral count.

THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

January 6, 2021

Dear Colleague:

Today, for the 59th time in our Nation's history, Congress will convene in Joint Session to count the electoral votes for President of the United States. Under our Constitution, it will be my duty as Vice President and as President of the Senate to serve as the presiding officer.

After an election with significant allegations of voting irregularities and numerous instances of officials setting aside state election law, I share the concerns of millions of Americans about the integrity of this election. The American people choose the American President, and have every right under the law to demand free and fair elections and a full investigation of electoral misconduct. As presiding officer, I will do my duty to ensure that these concerns receive a fair and open hearing in the Congress of the United States. Objections will be heard, evidence will be presented, and the elected representatives of the American people will make their decision.

Our Founders created the Electoral College in 1787, and it first convened in 1789. With the advent of political parties, the Electoral College was amended in 1804 to provide that Electors vote separately for President and Vice President. Following a contentious election in 1876, with widespread allegations of fraud and malfeasance, Congress spent a decade establishing rules and procedures to govern the counting of electoral votes and the resolution of any objections.

During the 130 years since the Electoral Count Act was passed, Congress has, without exception, used these formal procedures to count the electoral votes every four years.

Given the controversy surrounding this year's election, some approach this year's quadrennial tradition with great expectation, and others with dismissive disdain. Some believe that as Vice President, I should be able to accept or reject electoral votes unilaterally. Others believe that electoral votes should never be challenged in a Joint Session of Congress.

After a careful study of our Constitution, our laws, and our history, I believe neither view is correct.

The President is the chief executive officer of the Federal Government under our Constitution, possessing immense power to impact the lives of the American people. The Presidency belongs to the American people, and to them alone. When disputes concerning a presidential election arise, under Federal law, it is the people's representatives who review the evidence and resolve disputes through a democratic process.

Our Founders were deeply skeptical of concentrations of power and created a Republic based on separation of powers and checks and balances under the Constitution of the United States.

Vesting the Vice President with unilateral authority to decide presidential contests would be entirely antithetical to that design. As a student of history who loves the Constitution and reveres its Framers, I do not believe that the Founders of our country intended to invest the Vice President with unilateral authority to decide which electoral votes should be counted during the Joint Session of Congress, and no Vice President in American history has ever asserted such authority. Instead, Vice Presidents presiding over Joint Sessions have uniformly followed the Electoral Count Act, conducting the proceedings in an orderly manner even where the count resulted in the defeat of their party or their own candidacy.

As Supreme Court Justice Joseph Bradley wrote following the contentious election of 1876, "the powers of the President of the Senate are merely ministerial… He is not invested with any authority for making any investigation outside of the Joint Meeting of the two Houses… [I]f any examination at all is to be gone into, or any judgment exercised in relation to the votes received, it must be performed and exercised by the two Houses." More recently, as the former U.S. Court of Appeals Judge J. Michael Luttig observed, "[t]he only responsibility and power of the Vice President under the Constitution is to faithfully count the Electoral College votes as they have been cast," adding "[t]he Constitution does not empower the Vice President to alter in any way the votes that have been cast, either by rejecting certain votes or otherwise."

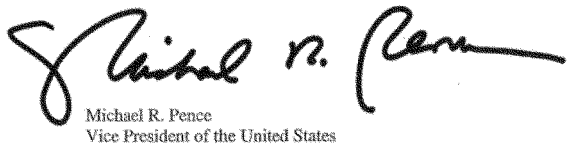
It is my considered judgment that my oath to support and defend the Constitution constrains me from claiming unilateral authority to determine which electoral votes should be counted and which should not.

While my role as presiding officer is largely ceremonial, the role of the Congress is much different, and the Electoral Count Act of 1887 establishes a clear procedure to address election controversies when they arise during the count of the vote of the Electoral College. Given the voting irregularities that took place in our November elections and the disregard of state election statutes by some officials, I welcome the efforts of Senate and House members who have stepped forward to use their authority under the law to raise objections and present evidence.

As presiding officer, I will ensure that any objections that are sponsored by both a Representative and a Senator are given proper consideration, and that all facts supporting those objections are brought before the Congress and the American people. Those who suggest that raising objections under the Electoral Count Act is improper or undemocratic ignore more than 130 years of history, and fail to acknowledge that Democrats raised objections in Congress each of the last three times that a Republican candidate for President prevailed.

Today it will be my duty to preside when the Congress convenes in Joint Session to count the votes of the Electoral College, and I will do so to the best of my ability. I ask only that Representatives and Senators who will assemble before me approach this moment with the same sense of duty and an open mind, setting politics and personal interests aside, and do our part to faithfully discharge our duties under the Constitution. I also pray that we will do so with humility and faith, remembering the words of John Quincy Adams, who said, "Duty is ours; results are God's."

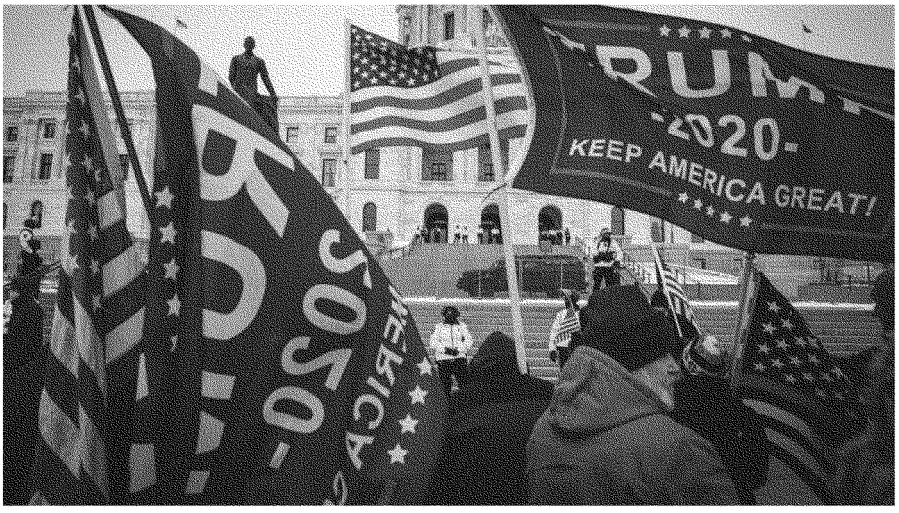
Four years ago, surrounded by my family, I took an oath to support and defend the Constitution, which ended with the words, "So help me God." Today I want to assure the American people that I will keep the oath I made to them and I will keep the oath I made to Almighty God. When the Joint Session of Congress convenes today, I will do my duty to see to it that we open the certificates of the Electors of the several states, we hear objections raised by Senators and Representatives, and we count the votes of the Electoral College for President and Vice President in a manner consistent with our Constitution, laws, and history. So Help Me God.



Michael R. Pence
Vice President of the United States

Armed protests being planned at all 50 state capitols, FBI bulletin says

abcnews.go.com/US/armed-protests-planned-50-state-capitols-fbi-bulletin/story



An internal FBI note obtained by ABC News shows warnings of "a huge uprising."

6:21

US Capitol riots: Tracking the insurrection

On Jan. 6, rioters coming from a pro-Trump rally broke into the U.S. Capitol, resulting in deaths, injuries, arrests and vandalism.

Leila Navidi/Star Tribune via AP

Starting this week and running through at least Inauguration Day, armed protests are being planned at all 50 state capitols and at the U.S. Capitol, according to an internal FBI bulletin obtained by ABC News.

The FBI has also received information in recent days on a group calling for "storming" state, local and federal government courthouses and administrative buildings in the event President Donald Trump is removed from office prior to Inauguration Day. The group is also

planning to "storm" government offices in every state the day President-elect Joe Biden will be inaugurated, regardless of whether the states certified electoral votes for Biden or Trump.

"The FBI received information about an identified armed group intending to travel to Washington, DC on 16 January," the bulletin read. "They have warned that if Congress attempts to remove POTUS via the 25th Amendment, a huge uprising will occur."

Stephanie Keith/Reuters, FILE
Supporters of President Donald Trump participate in a "Stop the Steal" protest outside of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., Jan. 6, 2021.

Federal law enforcement officials have advised police agencies to increase their security posture at statehouses around the country following the riot at the U.S. Capitol, law enforcement sources told ABC News.

Following the violent pro-Trump breach of the U.S. Capitol last Wednesday, Democratic lawmakers in the House of Representatives pushed forward Monday with an effort to get Vice President Mike Pence and the Cabinet to invoke the 25th Amendment, which would declare Trump incapable of performing his presidential duties and would install Pence as acting president until Biden is inaugurated Jan. 20.

MORE: Trump-Biden transition live updates: House Democrats introduce article of impeachment
The effort was ultimately blocked by Republican Rep. Alex Mooney of West Virginia, and House Democrats then introduced an article of impeachment against Trump for "incitement of insurrection."

The measure, which has more than 200 Democratic co-sponsors, states Trump has "demonstrated that he will remain a threat to national security, democracy and the Constitution if allowed to remain in office and has acted in a manner grossly incompatible with self-governance and the rule of law."

Leila Navidi/Star Tribune via AP
Supporters gather during a rally supporting President Trump at the Minnesota Capitol, Saturday, Jan. 9, 2021, in St. Paul, Minn.

According to the FBI, approximately 29 individuals and/or social media accounts of individuals who unlawfully entered the Capitol had been identified as of Sunday.

MORE: Capitol riots create concerns over inauguration security: ANALYSIS
The FBI has received nearly 45,000 digital media tips that are now being reviewed.

At least five people died during the siege on the Capitol, including Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick. The FBI bulletin said Sicknick "died from injuries sustained during the U.S. Capitol breach."

MORE: 2 Seattle police officers being investigated for involvement in Capitol attack

ABC News' Mariam Khan contributed to this report.

This report was featured in the Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2020, episode of "Start Here," ABC News' daily news podcast.

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American Civil Liberties Union Published on *American Civil Liberties Union* (https://www.aclu.org)

ACLU Again Calls for Impeachment of President Trump [1]

January 10, 2021

NEW YORK — The American Civil Liberties Union's national board of directors unanimously passed a second resolution today calling for the impeachment of President Donald J. Trump.

As a matter of organizational policy, the ACLU does not regularly call for the removal of public officials. Such a move requires action by the ACLU National Board of Directors. The full resolution states:

> "Having considered the ACLU's mission to preserve, protect, and advance civil liberties and civil rights, its commitment to nonpartisanship, and its policy permitting it to take a position on impeachment only where an official's acts pose a 'grave and imminent threat to civil liberties,'
>
> "The National Board of Directors of the ACLU previously resolved, on Dec. 19, 2019, that President Trump committed impeachable offenses and violated his oath to preserve, protect, and advance the Constitution.
>
> "The Board now resolves by a unanimous vote that President Trump has committed additional impeachable offenses, violated his oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, and poses a 'grave and imminent threat to civil liberties' by engaging in an extended pattern of bad-faith conduct designed to subvert the results of a democratic election, thereby violating the core principles of our constitutional democracy: the right of the people to choose their representatives, and the obligation of officials to abide by the results of free and fair elections, and ensure the peaceful transition of power.
>
> "The pattern includes:
>
> - Repeatedly making knowingly false statements about voter fraud and improprieties designed to undermine the legitimacy of the election results, including in a series of frivolous lawsuits, without evidence to support the claims;
> - Pressuring election officials in several states, including Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Georgia, to interfere with the results of the election, including a Jan. 2 taped phone call in which he abused the power of the presidency by demanding that the Georgia secretary of state 'find 11,780 votes,' and threatened criminal liability if the secretary of state did not do so;
> - Seeking to disenfranchise people of color by targeting many of these efforts at counties and jurisdictions, such as in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, and Wisconsin, with predominantly Black or Brown populations;
> - Directing Vice President Pence to block Congress' certification of the Electoral College results, where the vice president had neither the authority nor the grounds to do so; and
> - Urging an unruly mob to riot at the United States Capitol on Jan. 6, in an effort to prevent the certification of the Electoral College results and to intimidate members of Congress from carrying out their constitutional duties.

"The Board recognizes that officials have a right to pursue good-faith challenges to election results, where there is an arguable basis for doing so, including through public statements, outreach to government officials, filing lawsuits, and encouraging one's supporters. But the pattern of conduct engaged in by President Trump displayed an unfounded, unconstitutional, and bad-faith effort to undermine the election results merely because the president lost in order to maintain himself in office.

"Because our democracy rests on a commitment by representatives to let the people decide, these unprecedented acts constitute high crimes and misdemeanors that pose a grave and imminent threat to civil liberties, and to the foundations of our Republic, warranting President Trump's impeachment.

"The Board, therefore, supports the impeachment of President Donald Trump a second time on the aforementioned grounds."

Calling for the impeachment of President Trump in December 2019 was the second instance in the organization's history that the ACLU National Board of Directors voted to support impeachment of a president. This is the first time the ACLU is calling for a second impeachment. The organization also supported the impeachment of President Richard Nixon.

For more than 100 years, the ACLU has worked in courts, legislatures, and communities to protect the constitutional rights of all people. With a nationwide network of offices and millions of members and supporters, the ACLU takes on the toughest civil liberties fights in pursuit of liberty and justice for all.

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THE INSURRECTION

Members of Several Well-Known Hate Groups Identified at Capitol Riot

A ProPublica-FRONTLINE review of the insurrection found several noted hardcore nativists and white nationalists who also participated in the 2017 white power rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.

by A.C. Thompson and Ford Fischer, Jan. 9, 12:15 p.m. EST

Above: A crowd gathers outside the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday in Washington. (Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

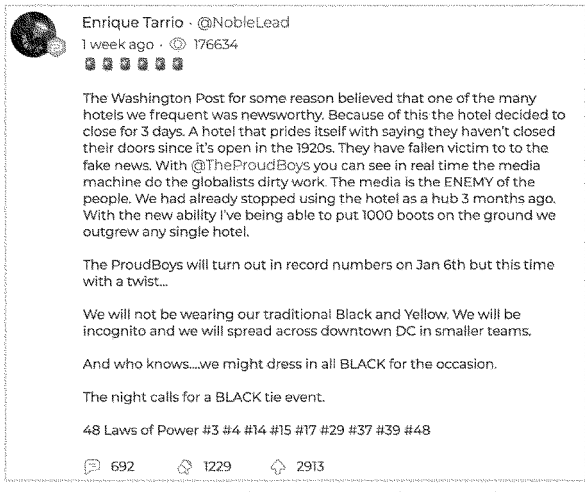
ProPublica is a nonprofit newsroom that investigates abuses of power. Sign up to receive our biggest stories as soon as they're published.

This story is part of an ongoing collaboration between ProPublica and FRONTLINE that includes an upcoming documentary.

Members of the ultranationalist street gang known as the Proud Boys were easy to spot at the protests that flared across the United States throughout 2020, often in the middle of a brawl, typically clad in black and yellow outfits.

But in December, as the group's leaders planned to flood Washington to oppose the certification of the Electoral College vote this week for President-elect Joe Biden, they decided to do something different.

"The ProudBoys will turn out in record numbers on Jan 6th but this time with a twist...," Henry "Enrique" Tarrio, the group's president, wrote in a late-December post on Parler, a social media platform that has become popular with right-wing activists and conservatives. "We will not be wearing our traditional Black and Yellow. We will be incognito and we will spread across downtown DC in smaller teams. And who knows....we might dress in all BLACK for the occasion."



Henry "Enrique" Tarrio's Parler post in late December. (ProPublica screenshot)

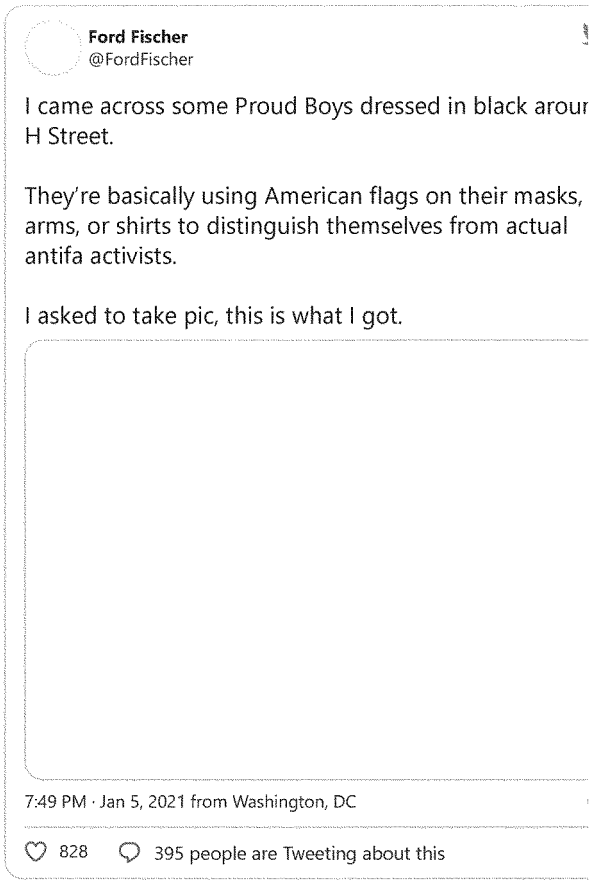
The precise composition of the mob that forced its way into the Capitol on Wednesday, disrupting sessions of both houses of Congress and leaving a police officer and four others dead, remains unknown. But a review by a ProPublica-FRONTLINE team that has been tracking far-right movements for the past three years shows that the crowd included members of the Proud Boys and other groups with violent ideologies. Videos reveal the presence of several noted hardcore nativists and white nationalists who participated in the 2017 white power rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, that President Donald Trump infamously refused to condemn.

Watch: Footage of the Insurrection at the Capitol



Tarrio does not appear to have been present during the insurrection. Two days before members of the House and Senate gathered to certify the Electoral College results, Washington's Metropolitan Police Department arrested Tarrio and charged him with possessing high-capacity firearm magazines and destruction of property over the burning of a Black Lives Matter banner last month. A judge barred him from entering the city while he awaits trial.

But it appears that Tarrio's followers heeded his advice. A journalist working with ProPublica and FRONTLINE encountered members of the Proud Boys in dark clothes walking through Washington on the night before the attack. The four men posed for a photo and confirmed their membership in the group. Few participants involved in the Capitol siege were seen wearing Proud Boys colors or logos.



Four men who confirmed membership in the Proud Boys posed for a photo the night before the attack.

But since the incident, Proud Boys social media channels have flaunted their direct role in the attack and looting of the Capitol.

One prominent Proud Boys account encouraged rioters as the chaos was unfolding: "Hold your ground!!!... DO NOT GO HOME. WE ARE ON THE CUSP OF SAVING THE CONSTITUTION."

So far, police have arrested more than 80 people in connection with the attack, including at least one Proud Boy, Nick Ochs. They have seized pipe

bombs and Molotov cocktails and arrested at least six people on illegal firearms charges, including one Maryland man who was captured in the visitors' center of the Capitol. More arrests are expected.

As the crowds ringing the Capitol swelled on Wednesday, a small group of men clad in body armor shuffled toward the doors at the center of the building's east-facing facade.

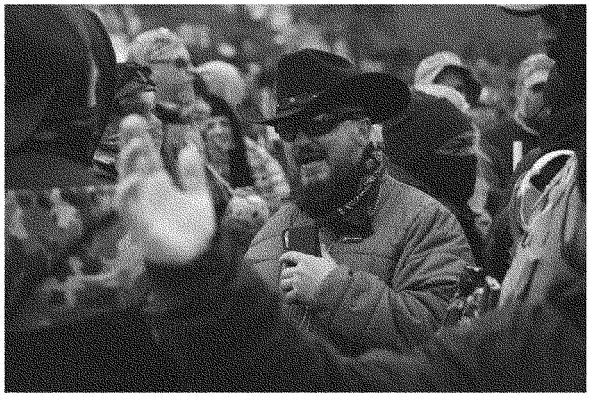
The eight men, whose movements were captured on video, were identified by ProPublica and FRONTLINE as members of the Oath Keepers, a long-standing militia group that has pledged to ignite a civil war on behalf of Trump. Members of the group joined the protesters and insurrectionists flooding into the Capitol. Footage from later in the day shows Oath Keepers dragging a wounded comrade out of the building.

About This Partnership

FRONTLINE

This story is part of an ongoing collaboration between ProPublica and FRONTLINE that includes an upcoming documentary. Listen to a FRONTLINE interview with reporter A.C. Thompson.

Stewart Rhodes, a former soldier and Yale law school graduate, who founded the Oath Keepers in 2009 and built it into a nationwide network, was seen on video standing outside the Capitol building. While he was not seen entering the Capitol, he could be seen talking with his militia followers throughout the day.



Stewart Rhodes, founder of the Oath Keepers, at the Capitol on Wednesday. (Ford Fischer)

Several other of the participants ProPublica and FRONTLINE identified from video have direct links to the white nationalist movement, which has seen a resurgence of activity during the Trump era.

One was Nick Fuentes, an internet personality who streams a daily talk show on DLive, an alternative social media platform. Fuentes, who marched in Charlottesville during the 2017 white power rally there, speaks frequently in anti-Semitic terms and pontificates on the need to protect America's white heritage from the ongoing shift in the nation's demographics. He has publicly denied believing in white nationalism but has said that he considers himself a "white majoritarian."

Fuentes, who spoke at pro-Trump rallies late last year in Michigan and Washington, D.C., said he was at the rally on Wednesday but didn't follow the mob into the Capitol. One group of Fuentes' supporters, who call themselves the Groyper Army, was filmed running through the Capitol carrying a large blue flag with the America First logo.

Days before the Capitol was stormed, Fuentes seemed to encourage his followers to kill state legislators in a bid to overturn Biden's electoral victory, as Megan Squire, a computer science professor at Elon University who follows online extremist communities, noted on Twitter.

"What can you and I do to a state legislator — besides kill him?" he said with a smirk. "We should not do that. I'm not advising that, but I mean, what else can you do, right?"

Squire fears that Fuentes' incendiary rhetoric will inspire his followers to engage in more drastic — even lethal — acts of political violence. "Instead of trying to appear democratic he's making an argument for fascism, for monarchism," she said. "He's criticizing democracy at every turn. He doesn't believe in democracy and it's scary because his fans find him fascinating."

DLive recently announced that it has booted Fuentes from its platform.

Another figure inside the Capitol with ties to white nationalists was Tim Gionet, a livestreamer who uses the handle Baked Alaska and who participated in the Charlottesville rally, which left one woman dead. Gionet was photographed within the Capitol and apparently used DLive to stream from within the building as events unfolded. Part of his video appeared to show him in Nancy Pelosi's office, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate groups.

Other extremist figures present either at the rally or within the Capitol included Vincent James Foxx, an online propagandist for the Rise Above Movement, a now-defunct Southern California white supremacist group.

Also on scene: Gabe Brown, a New Englander who helped create Anticom, a now-defunct organization devoted to physically combating leftists. In 2017, Anticom members posted a vast trove of bomb-making manuals to a private online chatroom.

The militant group members joined with scores of others who rampaged inside the Capitol.

Rep. André Carson, a Democrat from Indiana, said the scene reminded him of a Ku Klux Klan rally. Photos from within the Capitol showed one unidentified man carrying a Confederate battle flag and another wearing a sweatshirt emblazoned with a skull and the words "Camp Auschwitz," a reference to the infamous Nazi death camp.

Carson and other House members who spoke to ProPublica and FRONTLINE said the body would be launching an extensive investigation of the Capitol Police force and its mishandling of Wednesday's events.

The rioters, said Carson, who is Black, "were hostile. They were venomous. And I think there was a sense of entitlement that they carried that somehow their country was being taken away from them."

After the siege, a Boogaloo Bois group called the Last Sons of Liberty, which includes militants from Virginia, posted a video to Parler purporting to document their role in the incident — a clip that shows members inside the Capitol. A loose-knit confederation of anti-government militants, the Boogaloo Bois have been tied to a plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and to the murder of two law enforcement officers in California. ProPublica and FRONTLINE have been unable to independently confirm their involvement.

Some far-right activists are already calling for retribution over the death of Ashli Babbitt, a 35-year-old Air Force veteran from California who was shot and killed by a security officer. "We've got a girl that's dead. She's shot, laying on the ground in there," said Damon Beckley, leader of a group called DC Under Siege, in an interview just outside the Capitol while the riot was ongoing. "We're not putting up with this tyrannical rule. ... If we gotta come back here and start a revolution and take all these traitors out — which is what should happen — then we will."

Another person took to Parler to say that they were planning to show up, armed, in Washington for Inauguration Day. "Many of us will return on January 19, 2021 carrying Our weapons," wrote the Parler user, who goes by the handle Colonel007. "We will come in numbers that no standing army or police agency can match."

The Proud Boys also celebrated on social media. On Parler, one Proud Boys leader posted a photo of members of Congress cowering in fear and captioned it with a menacing statement: "Today you found out. The power of the people will not be denied."

Logan Jaffe of ProPublica and Lila Hassan, Dan Glaun and Zoe Todd of FRONTLINE contributed reporting.

Correction, Jan. 9, 2021: *This story has been updated to remove the name of an individual who upon further investigation could not be definitively identified.*



A.C. Thompson

Reporter A.C. Thompson covers hate crimes and racial extremism for ProPublica.

A.C.Thompson@propublica.org @acinvestigates

Official website of the Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

Acting Secretary Wolf Condemns Violence at The U.S. Capitol

Release Date: January 7, 2021

"What transpired yesterday was tragic and sickening. While I have consistently condemned political violence on both sides of the aisle, specifically violence directed at law enforcement, we now see some supporters of the President using violence as a means to achieve political ends. This is unacceptable. These violent actions are unconscionable, and I implore the President and all elected officials to strongly condemn the violence that took place yesterday.

DHS takes the safety and security of all Americans very seriously—it's at the core of our mission to defend our homeland. Any appearance of inciting violence by an elected official goes against who we are as Americans. Every American is guaranteed the right to peacefully protest, but once those protests become violent, we should enforce our laws and bring those responsible to justice—regardless of political motivations. After a challenging and saddening 2020, it's time for every American to respect each other and the rule of law in 2021.

I will remain in my position until the end of the Administration to ensure the Department's focus remains on the serious threats facing our country and an orderly transition to President-elect Biden's DHS team."

Topics: Homeland Security Enterprise (/topics/homeland-security-enterprise), Law Enforcement Partnerships (/topics/law-enforcement-partnerships), Secretary of Homeland Security (/topics/secretary-homeland-security)
Keywords: Acting Secretary Chad Wolf (/keywords/acting-secretary-chad-wolf), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (/keywords/dhs)

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Adam Rawnsley
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Updated Jan. 08, 2021 1:30PM ET
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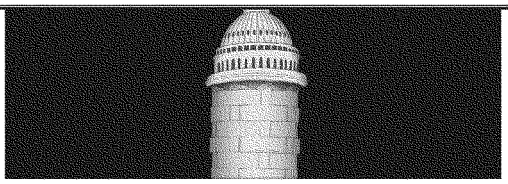

Illustration by Elizabeth Brockway/The Daily Beast

'Worse Than We Imagined': Trump Left Biden a COVID Nightmare
ERIN BANCO, SCOTT BIXBY

Dr. Fauci Shades Trump Admin at First Biden Briefing
MATT WILSTEIN

Rioter Beat DC Cop With Hockey Stick at Capitol Siege: DOJ
PILAR MELENDEZ

Law enforcement officials say the MAGA mob's attempt to seize the Capitol and sow destruction took them by surprise, but it shouldn't have.

Protesters flocked to Washington, D.C., on Jan. 6 because, in the fevered imagination of MAGA world, it represented the last chance to keep President Donald Trump in office. The protest was aimed squarely at pressuring members of Congress and the vice president to reject the reality of President-elect Joe Biden's win and disrupt the counting of electoral votes. What brought rioters to Washington and fired them up was only taking place at one location—the Capitol.

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Even if law enforcement officials couldn't draw the inference that the

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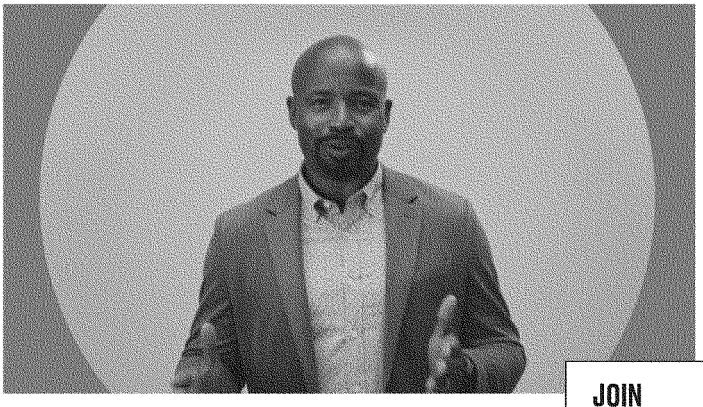

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CAPITOL RIOTS

Exiled Oath Keeper Called for Rifles at the Capitol. Now He's Spooked About the FBI.

FLIP-FLOP

After a slew of arrests of his former militia comrades, Sam Andrews is singing a different tune.

Kelly Weill Reporter

Updated Jan. 21, 2021 8:56AM ET
Published Jan. 21, 2021 4:56AM ET

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Masks Not on the Menu at Gov. Kristi Noem's Dinner for Teens
TRACY CONNOR

In the weeks ahead of the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, Sam Andrews had a message for the right.

"Contact your friends with rifles," he said in a mid-December appearance on a right-wing podcast. "And tell them to join you. That's who you contact. And then you get a map and you drive to D.C."

But since rioters stormed the Capitol, leaving five people dead in the melee,

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The Daily Beast on Wednesday. "Americans going armed to D.C. to protest would be a lot like standing in a field with your best friend over a cowpatty and stabbing each other for who gets to keep the cowpatty."

"It's a lot of bloodshed for a little shit," he added.

Oath Keeper Leader Charged With Conspiracy in Capitol Riots



'STORMING THE CASTLE'

Pilar Melendez

Andrews was outside the Capitol on Jan. 6, but says he did not enter the building. A former member of the far-right paramilitary group the Oath Keepers, he was until very recently a hype-man for bogus claims of voter fraud. But now, as members of his former group face criminal charges for storming the Capitol, Andews is one of many militant figures recalibrating their plans for the Biden era.

Following Donald Trump's election loss, Andrews appeared in a widely shared video that called on the right to converge on D.C. "armed, in large groups," as the *Washington Post*

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get a peaceful resolution on these voter corruption issues."

But a Capitol break-in wasn't in the fine print, he said.

> ***Do you know something we should about the Capitol Riot? Email Kelly.Weill@TheDailyBeast.com or securely at kellyweill@protonmail.com from a non-work device.***

"I didn't tell them to go into the Capitol armed or to break the law," Andrews told The Daily Beast. "But what I did tell them was you're going to want to head to D.C. armed because if this thing blows up, you're going to want to be in possession."

Andrews filmed himself outside the Capitol with a group of men, and claimed to have got close enough to the action to be struck by police's pepper spray. He said he supports prosecution for those who broke into the Capitol—that includes members of the Oath Keepers, the group with which he first rose to national headlines.

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and magazines loaded, and get ready, because this thing could come uncorked at any moment."

— Sam Andrews

Earlier this week, prosecutors released multiple conspiracy charges against Oath Keepers, including a leader of the group, for their alleged attack on the Capitol. According to charging documents, Oath Keepers—who count current and former law-enforcement and military among their members—used a walkie-talkie app to plan the assault.

"You are executing citizen's arrest. Arrest this assembly, we have probable cause for acts of treason, election fraud," one allegedly ordered another, who was in the Capitol. While inside the building, another Oath Keeper allegedly received a Facebook message stating that "all members are in the tunnels under capital seal them in. Turn on gas."

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2015, amid protests over police brutality in Ferguson, Missouri, the Oath Keepers cultivated a controversial presence in the city, suggesting arms training and offering to provide security for business owners. Andrews proposed an armed march alongside the city's Black residents, many of whom told him that police would retaliate against a march of armed Black people, he recalled.

Andrews broke from the Oath Keepers, accusing the group's leader, Stewart Rhodes, of holding a "racist double standard" when it came to armed actions. Rhodes and the Oath Keepers retaliated, releasing a video accusing him of berating and tearing down other members. Rhodes also cited a 2009 custody hearing in which Andrews' ex-wife accused him of abuse, including holding her at gunpoint for two hours, hitting her, and shooting at their dog.

"He is potentially unstable and potentially very violent," Rhodes said in the clip. Andrews called the allegations "BS" and an attempt by Rhodes, who did not respond to a request for comment, to discredit him.

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Immediately after the breakup with the Oath Keepers, Andrews appeared alongside other figures who would become well-known on the far right in the Trump years. A 2015 *Rolling Stone*

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on to be a member of the far-right streetfighting group the Proud Boys. Biggs was arrested on Wednesday for his alleged role in the Capitol riots. Charging documents claim he was one of the first to enter the Capitol through a broken window, although he denies having forced his way into the building.

This Far-Right Militia Went All-In Before the Capitol Riot



| TIME TO SHINE? |

Kelly Weill

Now separate from the Oath Keepers, Andrews has focused his efforts on a Lebanon, Missouri, shooting range, where he said he often trains law enforcement. In a recent podcast, a host claimed Andrews had trained the security team for Missouri Gov. Mike Parson, although both Andrews and a spokesperson for Parson said those claims were inaccurate.

Of course, Andrews is far from the only person to walk back calls to action in D.C.

Ali Alexander, one of the day's lead organizers, initially posted a video refusing to disavow the riot, but now claims to be in hiding, asking followers for $2,000 a day to support his security

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were called on, with organizers urging participants to take the demonstrations to their local statehouses and not to the nation's capital, which was flooded with National Guard members.

Statehouse rallies produced only middling turnout.

Despite previously claiming on a podcast that listeners should be primed for a gun confiscation in February, echoing years of far-right panic about Democratic presidents, Andrews told The Daily Beast that he was not advocating preemptive action.

"My statements are basically telling everyone in the United States: Get your rifles clean, get your ammo and magazines loaded, and get ready, because this thing could come uncorked at any moment," he said.

In the meantime, he was looking over his shoulder.

Shortly after speaking to The Daily Beast, Andrews suggested on Facebook that journalists were calling him on the FBI's orders to somehow make him implicate himself in a crime.

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Kelly Weill
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Oath Keepers' Stewart Rhodes Calls for 'Bloody War' if Trump Doesn't Invoke Insurrection Act

<https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/astan/>By Adele M. Stan <https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/astan/> | December 14, 2020 11:48 am

At a Dec. 12 rally <https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/infighting-among-stop-the-steal-activists-intensifies-ahead-of-competing-d-c-rallies-saturday/> of Trump fans convened on the National Mall, Oath Keepers leader Stewart Rhodes <https://web.archive.org/web/20111230074339/https://www.alternet.org/news/146511/patriot_schemes:_oath_keeper_founder_goes_off_on_maddow,_mother_jones_--_and_alternet?page=entire> called on President Donald Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act in the wake of Democrat Joe Biden's imminent ascendency to the presidency of the United States, and declare martial law. Should Trump fail to do this, Rhodes said, Oath Keepers <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/oath-keepers> and its fellow travelers would be compelled to take matters into their own hands, in what he said would be a "much more bloody war."

The rally was convened jointly <https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/right-wing-religious-and-political-activists-trying-to-overturn-biden-victory-will-converge-on-washington-dec-12/> by the right-wing groups Jericho March and Phyllis Schlafly Eagles, and organized by the hard-right smear-monger Ali Alexander to protest what they claim, without credible evidence, was a massive fraud operation by the Democrats in the 2020 presidential election.

Rhodes also seemed to call for Trump to pardon Julian Assange "and put him in charge of doing a data dump," which would, in Rhodes' mind, expose the alleged fraudsters. The Insurrection Act would apparently permit the United States Special Operations Command, in Rhodes' reading, to "seize the files" that, per his scheme, would then be provided to Assange.

As Rhodes brought his "bloody war" speech to a close, emcee Eric Metaxas <https://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/eric-metaxas-will-emcee-national-right-wing-prayer-rally-to-overturn-presidential-election/> offered him a blessing, adding <https://youtu.be/aect4gkka0c>, "This guy's keepin' it real, folks."

Oath Keepers is a group formed in concert with the Tea Party movement that comprises a membership of law enforcement officers and veterans of the armed forces who pledge not to execute orders that they deem to be unconstitutional.

From Rhodes' rally speech, as livestreamed by Right Side Broadcasting:

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RHODES: ...SOCOM that goes [to] seize all the files, all the databases, and he's a free Julian Assange. And put him in charge of doing a data dump to display to all of you all the skeletons out of the closet into the streets, show the world who the traitors are, and then use the Insurrection Act to drop the hammer on them. And all of us veterans who swore that oath–until you're age 65, you can be called up as the militia to support and defend the Constitution. He needs to know from you that you are with him, [and] that if he does not do it now while he is commander in chief, we're going to have to do it ourselves later, in a much more desperate, much more bloody war. Let's get it on now–while he is still the commander in chief.

METAXAS: Oh, God bless you. This guy's keepin' it real, folks. I thought we'd bring a little music from Marian Markarian.

Tags: Donald J. Trump, Eric Metaxas, Julian Assange, Stewart Rhodes, Anti-Government, Jericho March, Oath Keepers, Phyllis Schlafly Eagles, Stop the Steal

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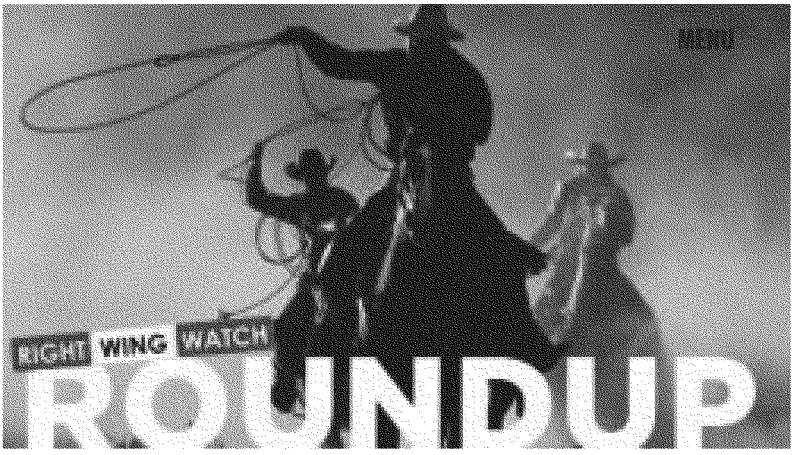

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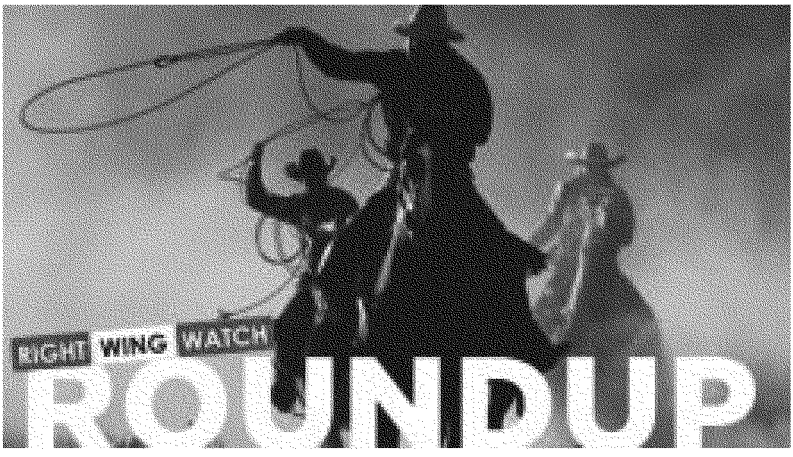

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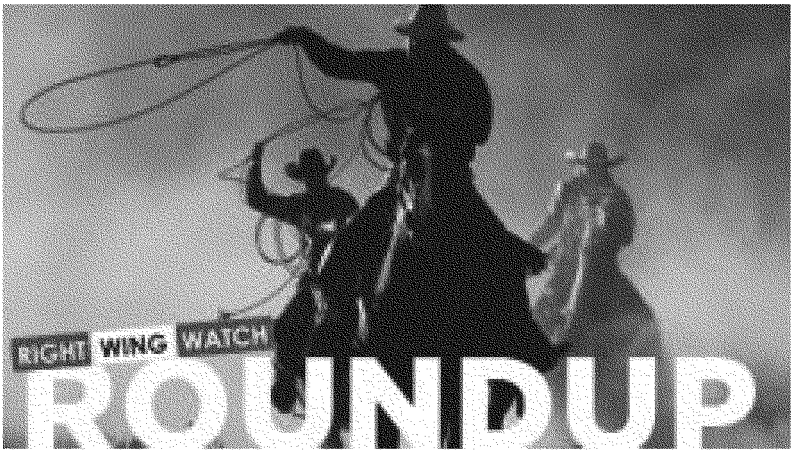

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Extremists and Mainstream Trump Supporters Gather for "Million MAGA March"



Photo credit: SBG

Thousands gathered in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, November 14, 2020 for the so-called Million MAGA March. Attendees and speakers, including a number of extremists, expressed support for President Trump, who continue to insist, without evidence, that he won re-election nearly two weeks ago.

The rally was loosely organized, and speeches, some of which were impromptu, took place in both Freedom Plaza as well as in front of the Supreme Court. While the main rally was mostly peaceful, at least 20 people were arrested on various charges throughout the evening following the event. Most of the conflict occurred between Trump supporters and counter-

protesters, with some fistfights, leaving some bloodied. At least one stabbing was reported. Some Trump supporters appeared to be harassed by counter-demonstrators, targeted with bottled liquid and, in one case, fireworks. After altercations between Proud Boys and counter-protesters, Proud Boys reportedly chanted 'Break out Kyle!' in reference to Kyle Rittenhouse.

There was a notable extremist presence at the D.C. protest. Dozens of Proud Boys were on the ground, led by Enrique Tarrio. Later, the group held an evening "initiation" ritual at the Washington Monument.

White supremacist Nick Fuentes, accompanied by members of his so-called Groyper Army also took part, waving their group's flag alongside Trump 2020 flags. Fuentes, speaking to a group of groypers, railed against Republican legislators and Fox News, adding. "...we are not going to live as captives. This is our Republican party. This is our country. USA!"



The groypers were joined by fellow white supremacists Patrick Casey, former head of Identity Evropa/American Identity Movement, Tim Gionet (aka Based Alaska) and Vincent James of the Red Elephants. Reporters also spotted Oath Keepers leader Stewart Rhodes and Unite the Right organizer Jason Kessler marching with the crowd.

InfoWars' Alex Jones and Owen Shroyer, who have been promoting their cross-country "Stop the Steal" tour, both gave speeches.



Jones gave perhaps the most inflammatory speech of the day, echoing the conspiracy theories that have long defined his tenure as a public figure. He framed the march as the second July 4, 1776, to be celebrated "for hundreds of

years as the Second American Revolution." He spoke about the "Death to the New World Order, death to tyranny, and life to America and our unborn children. The pedophile globalists and their attempted election steal and the Clinton blackmail rings have only summoned the sleeping giant that is America." He also said, "The Satanist pedophiles the Democrats represent knew the world awakening was here. And so you're seeing, right now, their desperate operation against humanity. And make no mistake, they control the corporations, they control Hollywood, they control the blue cities and blue states and other governments."

Boogalooer Mike Dunn, antisemite Jovi Val, a number of QAnon adherents and a small group of Patriot Prayer, Oath Keepers and American Guard supporters rounded out the extremist presence.

A number of politicians and public figures took the stage including newly elected U.S. Rep. (and QAnon enthusiast) Marjorie Greene (R-GA), U.S. Rep Louie Gohmert (R-TX) and former deputy assistant to the President Sebastian Gorka.

Greene spoke about need to win the two U.S. Senate seats in Georgia in order to "save America and stop socialism." Gorka told the crowd, "We don't want violence, but we will never let them steal our republic." Gohmert, meanwhile, characterized the protests against the "stolen election" as "a fight to save this little experiment self-government from the establishment, from the globalists...Don't give up the fight!"

President Trump drove by the event as it began, on his way to play golf, waving from his vehicle along the march route. Later, he tweeted an image of the crowd and repeated his baseless claims of a "stolen" election. Vice

President Pence also voiced his support, tweeting, "Thank You All! What a great #MarchforTrump! MAGA!"

There was minimal extremist presence, meanwhile, at simultaneous "Stop the Steal" rallies in Arizona, Tennessee, Oregon, Michigan, and Georgia, where QAnon supporters were visible, along with close to a dozen people wearing militia-inspired gear.

Updated Monday, November 16, 2020

The New York Times https://nyti.ms/3q2BUVF

Rampage Weighs on Congressional Staff Members and Capitol Workers

The violence caused by a pro-Trump mob on Wednesday has shaken many who work at the Capitol. And some people of color say the law enforcement response reopened old wounds.

By Aishvarya Kavi

Published Jan. 8, 2021 Updated Jan. 11, 2021

[Follow our live news on the Capitol Riots.]

WASHINGTON — Some huddled in corners of the U.S. Capitol, texting loved ones. Others were glued to their televisions at home as their place of work was overrun by rioters who smashed windows, ravaged offices and tore down American flags, shocking the country.

For many congressional staff members and Capitol workers, in particular people of color, the damage wrought on Wednesday was visceral. It will be a long time before they feel safe again at work, they say, knowing that a building once thought to be among the most secure in Washington could be breached by a mob carrying, among other things, a Confederate flag and displaying anti-Semitic iconography.

"They came into our house with the worst of intentions," said Tré Easton, a legislative assistant to Senator Patty Murray, Democrat of Washington. "You add, on top of that, this open bigotry in what are supposed to be hallowed halls? I don't know if I can feel safe, just knowing that this is possible."

The Capitol Police have come under fire for seeming, at times, to offer little resistance to the pro- Trump mob. While some experts defended their actions as prioritizing the protection of lawmakers over the securing of the building, many congressional staff members, along with custodial and food service workers, were left wondering whether they were safe.

"I have a lot of mixed feelings about the Capitol Police's stance and their strategy," said Julian Purdy, who works for the House Veterans Affairs Committee. "One can say that the Capitol Police chose protecting the people, staff and members above protecting the property and the iconography of the Capitol itself."

Noting that he is an Army veteran, Mr. Purdy, who is Black, said prioritizing people above all was understandable. But he said that it was hard to reconcile that stance with the destruction his colleagues witnessed in person and that he watched play out on television.

"I don't think I've fully processed it all yet," he said.

Some food service and custodial workers feel even more vulnerable. Rickie Toon, a cook who works in the Capitol but was at home on Wednesday, said he knew colleagues who had been caught in the violence and sprayed with tear gas.

"I have always felt they never did have enough security," said Mr. Toon, who is Black. But he said the evacuation response had been handled better than it was on Sept. 11, 2001, when, he said, the police did not even inform kitchen workers of the terrorist threat to the Capitol, let alone evacuate them.

Many say they have always recognized the risks of working at the Capitol. Before the coronavirus pandemic, the grounds regularly hosted protests. Even bomb threats were commonplace. But Wednesday's siege came as a shock.

"When you're a staffer, you know when something like that happens, you're not going to be the priority," said Nicole Tisdale, a Black consultant who spent 10 years working for Democratic and Republican lawmakers before leaving to help train congressional staff members and advocacy groups. "I had never felt insecure in the Capitol itself. But now

all of this feels like it's been security theater."

RACE/RELATED: *A deep and provocative exploration of race, identity and society with New York Times journalists.* Sign Up

Black staff members in particular said the rampage had reminded them of the struggles they had often had to come to terms with in order to work for Congress.

"I'm a gay, Black guy from rural Georgia — and it's a thumb in the nose of some that I get to work in this place," Mr. Easton said. He noted that he worked in an office building named for Senator Richard B. Russell Jr. of Georgia, who was a strident supporter of racial segregation and white nationalism.

"But the images of hatred and violence were especially raw and resonant for me," said Mr. Easton, who watched the destruction unfold while working from home. "That's something staffers of color especially have felt, when there are just a few of us in this place, relatively speaking."

One senior African-American Democratic aide spent nearly six hours locked down in the Rayburn House Office Building. Having worked in Congress for 14 years, she said, witnessing law enforcement officials' lackluster response to the mob in comparison to how she had seen people of color treated was the final straw.

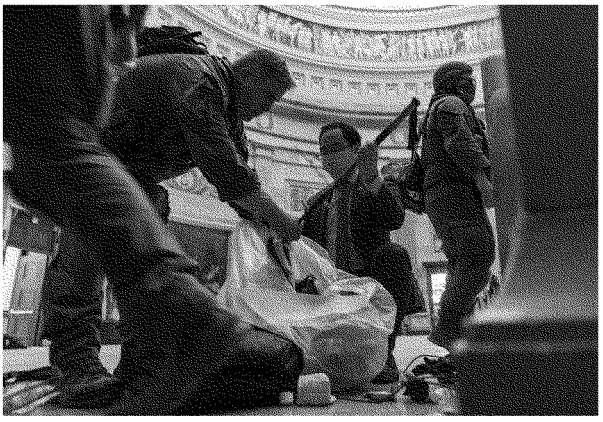
"I am planning to leave," said the woman, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to talk candidly about the effects of what had happened. "I'm exhausted from this battle. Wednesday was like a nail in the coffin."

Another Democratic aide said he had been disturbed by a moment amid the violence on Wednesday when he saw a few white colleagues, ties loosened and looking unstressed, walking around the Rayburn building with red plastic cups.

"They were acting like this was normal," said the man, who is Asian-American.

Ms. Tisdale, who works on national security policy, said she and some of her colleagues at the Capitol had viewed the event as a terrorist attack. But she said they had been left disappointed by the lack of public sympathy for people in the Capitol who had been caught up in the violence.

"I know how law enforcement responds after a terror attack and after a mass shooting, and I know how the public responds," Ms. Tisdale said. "That's not what has happened here. Because all of these people work on the Hill, people are fighting about the politics."



Rep. Andy Kim helped law enforcement officers clean up debris in the Capitol Rotunda on Thursday. Andrew Harnik/Associated Press

Representative Andy Kim, a New Jersey Democrat, saw a certain arrogance in what the rioters did. "When people storm in — literally break down the door of America and desecrate this temple of our democracy and this flag — it shows that they think they're bigger than this country," he said. "They think they're better than our institutions."

Mr. Kim walked the halls of the Capitol on Wednesday after the building had been secured. He said he had felt obligated to help clean up the mess that had been left behind. He borrowed a trash bag from Capitol Police officers and began picking up water bottles, broken flags and even tactical gear that had been left behind.

"Whoever bought it, bought it for the purpose of this event, which scared me tremendously," Mr. Kim said of a military-grade vest he found, his voice choking over the phone as he spoke through tears.

One Black congressional staff member who also took a walk through the Capitol to survey the aftermath on Wednesday night said that despite all the damage, he had been stopped in his tracks outside Representative Steny Hoyer's office, where a poster honoring John Lewis, the congressman and civil rights leader who died in August, had been displayed. It was missing.

He looked for it feverishly and found only a broken piece on the ground next to a trash can. The image of Mr. Lewis was gone. All that remained of his celebrated quote, "Get into good trouble, necessary trouble," were the final two words — smudged by a boot print.

"That portrait was draped in black cloth," he said. "They destroyed it."

Pranshu Verma contributed reporting.

The New York Times https://nyti.ms/3bOkj00

'I Answered the Call of My President': Rioters Say Trump Urged Them On

The defense from Trump supporters arrested in the Capitol assault is emerging in court papers and interviews — and could play a role in impeachment proceedings.

By Alan Feuer and Nicole Hong

Jan. 17, 2021

In the two weeks since a raging mob stormed the Capitol, President Trump has shown no sign that he believes he shares responsibility for the worst incursion on the halls of Congress in more than two centuries. Shielding him further, his loyalists have started shifting blame for the attack to an array of distracting bogeymen: far-left anti-fascists, Black Lives Matter activists, even vague conspiracies of a setup involving Vice President Mike Pence.

But one group of people has already come forward and directly implicated Mr. Trump in the riot at the Capitol: some of his own supporters who were arrested while taking part in it. In court papers and interviews, at least four pro-Trump rioters have said they joined the march that spiraled into violence in part because the president encouraged them to do so.

In the past few days, a retired firefighter charged with assaulting members of the Capitol Police force told a friend he went to the building following "the president's instructions," according to a criminal complaint, and a Texas real estate agent accused of breaching the building told a reporter that by protesting in Washington, she had "answered the call of my president."

A Virginia man has told the F.B.I. that he and his cousin marched on the Capitol because Mr. Trump said "something about taking Pennsylvania Avenue." And a lawyer for the so-called QAnon Shaman — who invaded the building in a Viking costume — said that Mr. Trump was culpable, and he planned to ask the White House for a pardon.

"Does our president bear responsibility?" the lawyer, Al Watkins, told The New York Times. "Hell, yes, he does."

The nationwide dragnet for those accused of breaking into the Capitol is only in its early stages, and it is likely to take weeks until the full scope and contours of the investigation are known. But with dozens of people now in custody and starting to appear in court, the accounts they give about Mr. Trump could end up not only as fodder in criminal proceedings but also at an impeachment trial to bolster charges that the president incited the assault.

On Wednesday, Mr. Trump was impeached for a second time after the House voted to approve a single charge, citing his part in whipping up the mob that descended on the Capitol on Jan. 6 after attending a rally where Mr. Trump and his allies repeated his baseless assertions that the election was rigged against him. He now faces a trial in the Senate that could disqualify him from future office.

While it would be unusual if any of the defendants charged in the Capitol attack were called as witnesses in the impeachment drama, it is possible that Democrats could cite statements about Mr. Trump that those defendants have made in public or to investigators.

At the very least, the emergence of a "Trump-made-me-do-it" defense could serve to undercut the baseless narrative by some of the president's congressional allies and his personal lawyer, Rudolph W. Giuliani, who have sought to push the story that outside agitators or disloyal servants were responsible for the Capitol attack.

As the criminal cases stemming from the riot move through the legal system, they also could put some of Mr. Trump's most ardent followers in the awkward position of having to publicly lay blame at the feet of the man they came out to support.

NICHOLAS KRISTOF: *A behind-the-scenes look at Nicholas Kristof's gritty journalism, as he travels around the world.* Sign Up

The approach is formally known as a public authority defense, and in using it, lawyers can try to argue that their clients are not guilty because a government official permitted them to commit the crimes.

Legal scholars have questioned the viability of the defense in the case of the Capitol breach, noting that anyone who seeks to blame Mr. Trump for their part in the assault would have to prove not only that they believed he had authorized their actions, but also that such a belief was reasonable.

But even if trying to offload responsibility onto Mr. Trump may not be effective at a trial, it could ultimately help lighten the punishment for anyone convicted of a crime in connection with the attack, said Judith P. Miller, a law professor at the University of Chicago.



Before the invasion of the Capitol, Mr. Trump spoke at a rally and told his supporters that "you'll never take back our country with weakness." Pete Marovich for The New York Times

"The fact that our country's highest leader is promoting this grand lie and giving millions of people a sense of righteousness, and that they're on the side of the angels, that seems like it could be potentially strong mitigating evidence," Ms. Miller said.

Mr. Trump began promoting his Washington event well before it happened, urging his allies to join him for a speech outside the White House. During the address, attended by thousands, he told the crowd "to walk down to the Capitol" where Congress, overseen by Mr. Pence, was certifying the final count of the election results.

"You'll never take back our country with weakness," he admonished the throng. "You have to show strength, and you have to be strong."

Shortly after Robert Sanford, a retired firefighter from Boothwyn, Pa., heard those words, he joined the growing mob that was marching on the Capitol. There, federal prosecutors say, Mr. Sanford heaved a fire extinguisher at a group of police officers, striking and injuring three of them.

When Mr. Sanford got home, according to a criminal complaint filed last week, he told a friend he had gone to Washington to hear Mr. Trump, then "followed the president's instructions" and moved on to the Capitol.

His lawyer, Enrique Latoison, said in an interview with The Times that he was still exploring whether blaming Mr. Trump for Mr. Sanford's alleged role in the attack would work in front of a judge.

"You're being told, 'You gotta fight like hell,'" Mr. Latoison said. "Does 'fight like hell' mean you can throw stuff at people? Maybe."

Mr. Latoison noted that the only reason Mr. Sanford was in Washington at all was because of Mr. Trump. "That man wouldn't have been there if it wasn't for the president," he said.

When Jennifer L. Ryan flew from Texas to Washington on a private plane with friends, she did so, as she later told a reporter, because Mr. Trump "asked us to go."

"He said, 'Be there,'" Ms. Ryan explained. "So I went and I answered the call of my president."

Not long afterward, prosecutors say, Ms. Ryan, a real estate agent from a Dallas suburb, posed for a photograph in front of a broken window at the Capitol and then illegally entered the building through its Rotunda entrance. In a now-deleted Facebook video, court papers say, she could be heard joining the trespassing crowd inside shouting, "Fight for freedom!" and "This is our house!"

Supporters of Mr. Trump began to march toward the Capitol after listening to the president's speech. Pete Marovich for The New York Times

Another video emerged on Sunday of the mob inside the building confronting the Capitol Police, while one man yelled at the officers that he and his fellow rioters were there because they were "listening to Trump, your boss."

That, in essence, was the argument that Mr. Watkins, who is based in St. Louis, plans to make as he begins his defense of the QAnon Shaman, a Phoenix man whose real name is Jacob Chansley.

Mr. Chansley, an unemployed actor who has made a name for himself in recent weeks by turning up at pro-Trump rallies in face paint, a horned battle helmet and a six-foot spear, was charged with breaking into the Senate chamber and leaving a note for Mr. Pence that read, "It's only a matter of time, justice is coming." On Friday, a federal judge in Arizona ordered him detained pending trial, saying he was "an active participant in a violent insurrection to overthrow the U.S. government."

Mr. Watkins did not deny that Mr. Chansley was inside the Capitol that day, but suggested he had gone there because he, like others, "hung on the words of the president" for comfort and guidance. "What you've got here are people like my client who take the president seriously," Mr. Watkins added, "and look to him to make them feel relevant in a system that has made them feel neglected."

That is why Mr. Watkins plans in the coming days to ask Mr. Trump to pardon Mr. Chansley, comparing him and the others at the Capitol to cult members.

"They were betrayed by somebody in whom they'd placed their faith," Mr. Watkins said. "They're like the followers of Jim Jones. The only thing missing was the Kool-Aid."

Reporting contributed by Rebecca R. Ruiz.

The New York Times | https://nyti.ms/39nA0IH

Police Reassess Security for Inauguration and Demonstrations After Capitol Attack

In the wake of last week's assault on the Capitol, Mayor Muriel E. Bowser of Washington called for officials to expedite security preparations for the inauguration.

By Alan Feuer

Published Jan. 10, 2021 Updated Jan. 15, 2021

[Here's what you need to know about President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s Inauguration Day.]

Federal and local authorities across the country pressed their hunt this weekend for the members of the angry mob that stormed the Capitol building last Wednesday, as Washington's mayor issued an urgent appeal to start preparing immediately for more potential violence before, during and after the inauguration of President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.

Following one of the most stunning security lapses in the city's history, Mayor Muriel E. Bowser sent a firmly worded letter on Saturday to the Department of Homeland Security, asking officials to move up to Monday the implementation of heightened security measures that are otherwise set to begin on Jan. 19, just one day before Mr. Biden's swearing-in.

Ms. Bowser's call to action, which came as law enforcement officers in several states made arrests related to the assault on the Capitol, was echoed Sunday by Senator Roy Blunt, the Missouri Republican who is charged with overseeing the planning of the inaugural celebration.

The Capitol complex, typically a hive of activity, remained cut off from its surroundings Sunday night by troop deployments and an imposing scrim of seven-foot-tall, unscalable fencing. Still in shock from the worst breach of the building in more than two centuries, lawmakers were expected to turn their attention this week to a second slate of impeachment charges against President Trump, who has said little about the rampage he helped incite — in part because social media companies, like Twitter and Facebook, have either banned him or severely limited his use of their platforms.

Security experts warned this weekend that some far-right extremist groups have now started to focus attention on Inauguration Day and are already discussing an assault similar to the one on the Capitol, which led to the sacking of congressional offices and the deaths of

at least five people, including a Capitol Police officer.

As of Sunday, nearly 400 people had joined a private group online dedicated to what is being billed as the "Million Militia March," an event scheduled to take place in Washington on Jan. 20. On Parler, a social media site popular on the far right that is in danger of being taken offline because of rampant talk of violence, commenters were debating what tools they should bring to the march, mentioning everything from baseball bats to body armor to assault rifles.

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"We took the building once," one person posted. "We can take it again."

While most of the chatter online appears to be directed toward Inauguration Day, some on the right have argued that pro-Trump activists should instead gather once again on Capitol Hill and hold other rallies in cities outside Washington on Jan. 17. Over the weekend, fliers began to circulate on Parler and in private groups on the chatting services WhatsApp and Signal, calling for an "Armed march on Capitol Hill and all state capitols" at noon that day.

"I'd like to come to this, but want to know, does our president want us there?" asked one person on the social media site Gab. "Awaiting instructions."

In a statement, the U.S. Secret Service, which is responsible for security at the inauguration, said the inauguration was "a foundational element of our democracy" and "the safety and security of all those participating" was "of the utmost importance."

In a separate statement, Representative Jason Crow, a Colorado Democrat and former Army Ranger, said he had spoken with military officials who were aware of "possible threats posed by would-be terrorists" in the coming days and were working with local and federal law enforcements officers to prevent them.

The Presidential Inauguration ›

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- Michael Ellis, a Trump appointee at the N.S.A. who was sworn in on Tuesday, has been placed on leave.
- The Biden administration moved to remove a Trump labor appointee.
- Inaugural concert with Bruce Springsteen, Justin Timberlake, John Legend and more begins.

Is this helpful?

Even as the throng of hundreds — if not thousands — breached gates, smashed windows and stormed into the Capitol last week, there were also tense standoffs at statehouses in Kansas, Colorado, Oregon and Georgia. On Saturday, that trend seemed to continue as Senator Charles E. Grassley, Republican of Iowa, said he was told of a "disturbing report of a death threat" received on Friday by the Iowa Democratic Party.

"Threats like this & violence are UNACCEPTABLE," Mr. Grassley wrote on Twitter.

On Monday, the Michigan Capitol Commission is scheduled to meet to consider banning guns from the building. In April, in a kind of dress rehearsal for the chaos in Washington, a group of gun-toting protesters decrying coronavirus lockdowns rushed the State Capitol in Lansing, not long after Mr. Trump tweeted, "Liberate Michigan."

Armed with federal warrants, law enforcement officers spent much of the weekend cracking down on people who had stormed the National Capitol, making a series of arrests in states from Iowa to Florida, and filing new charges against some of the more than 80 people who were taken into custody last week by local officers in Washington. Among those charged so far have been a man seen hauling off House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's lectern; the leader of the Hawaii chapter of the far-right nationalist group the Proud Boys; and a proponent of the QAnon conspiracy theory known for showing up at pro-Trump rallies in a headdress with horns and a spear.

On Saturday, federal prosecutors filed a new complaint against Cleveland Grover Meredith Jr., a Georgia man who was accused of threatening Ms. Pelosi by saying in a text message that he was going to put "a bullet in her noggin on Live TV." Federal agents said that Mr. Meredith had been staying at a Holiday Inn in Washington and had weapons in his camper-style trailer that included a Glock handgun, a Tavor X95 assault rifle and hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

On Sunday, prosecutors brought charges of violent entry and disorderly conduct against a figure who had first been identified online by civilian sleuths: Eric G. Munchel of Nashville. In a photograph that circulated widely after the attack, Mr. Munchel, 30, was pictured wearing tactical military gear and carrying a handful of plastic restraints known as zip ties.

Prosecutors in Washington also filed a complaint Sunday on similar charges against Larry R. Brock, a retired Air Force officer from Texas, saying he too had been carrying plastic restraints.

The F.B.I. has said that it has received more than 40,000 tips online about the Capitol mob, including photographs and video clips. In an interview with NPR on Sunday, Michael R. Sherwin, the U.S. attorney in Washington, said that the Justice Department was considering charges for "theft of national security information" after some in the mob looted laptops, documents and other items from congressional offices.

Some of those who had been at the Capitol discovered that they had been put on government no-fly lists as they tried on Sunday to make their way home from Washington.

As charges continued to be filed, more participants in the attack were identified around the country, among them business executives and local school board officials. Several police departments — and the New York Fire Department — have said they are investigating members who may have taken part in the assault.

Reporting was contributed by Kathleen Gray, Zolan Kanno-Youngs, Sheera Frenkel and Adam Goldman.

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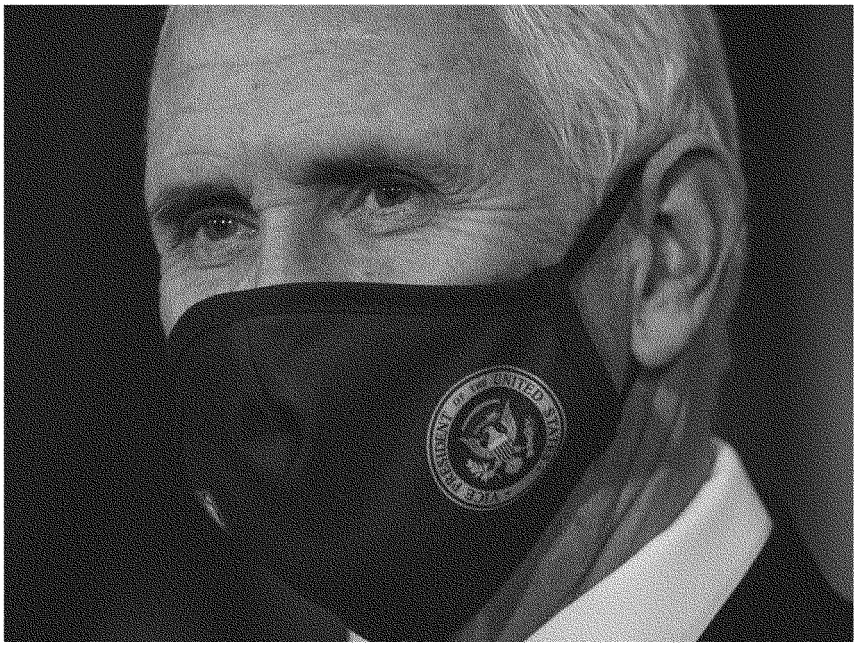
Insurrection At The Capitol: Live Updates

Pence Says He Doesn't Have Power To Reject Electoral Votes

January 6, 2021 · 1:07 PM ET

ALANA WISE



Vice President Pence finishes a swearing-in ceremony for senators Sunday at the U.S. Capitol.

J. Scott Applewhite/AP

Updated at 2:20 p.m. ET

Vice President Pence said on Wednesday that he does not have the power to reject Electoral College votes, calling his role in the joint session of Congress to count the ballots "largely ceremonial," despite pressure from President Trump.

"It is my considered judgment that my oath to support and defend the Constitution constrains me from claiming unilateral authority to determine which electoral votes should be counted and which should not," Pence said in a letter to Congress.

His statement came as Trump urged him to take steps to overturn the election in a speech to supporters near the White House.



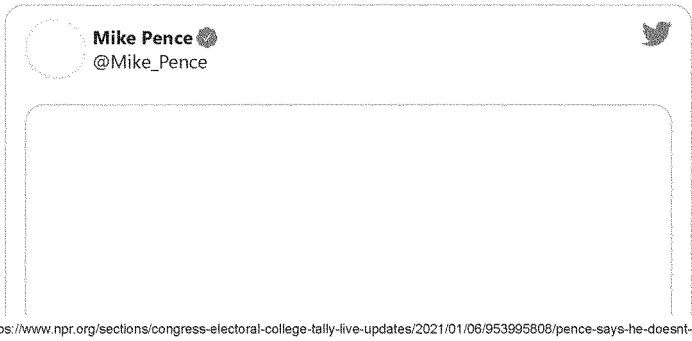
CONGRESS' ELECTORAL COLLEGE TALLY: LIVE UPDATES

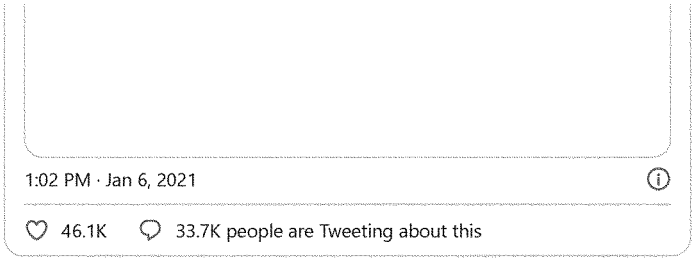
Watch Live: Congress Tallies And Debates Electoral College Votes

Trump's ongoing refusal to concede in the race, despite having lost both the popular and electoral vote, has animated much of his base, including a number of lawmakers who have vowed to contest the election's results during Wednesday's session.

In two Wednesday tweets, Trump called on Pence to "[come] through for us" and exhibit "extreme courage" by rejecting the certification process.

Despite Republicans' calls to dismiss millions of legal votes, Pence wrote that he would "keep the oath" he made to the American people by upholding the Constitution to the best of his ability. That, he said, included ensuring that all formal objections to the certification process were heard.





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POLITICS

Top Trump Economic Adviser Resigns Following Capitol Riots

Tyler Goodspeed, the acting chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, has stepped down



Tyler Goodspeed, second from left, has resigned as acting chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

PHOTO: YURI GRIPAS/ZUMA PRESS

By *Kate Davidson*
Jan. 7, 2021 12:14 pm ET

Listen to this article
1 minute

WASHINGTON—One of President Trump's top economic advisers has resigned following violent riots at the Capitol building on Wednesday.

Tyler Goodspeed, the acting chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, submitted his resignation on Thursday, a spokeswoman confirmed. He wasn't immediately available for comment.

"The events at the U.S. Capitol yesterday led Tyler to conclude his position was untenable," Rachael Slobodien, the council's chief of staff, said in a statement.

The New York Times previously reported Mr. Goodspeed's resignation.

Write to Kate Davidson at kate.davidson@wsj.com

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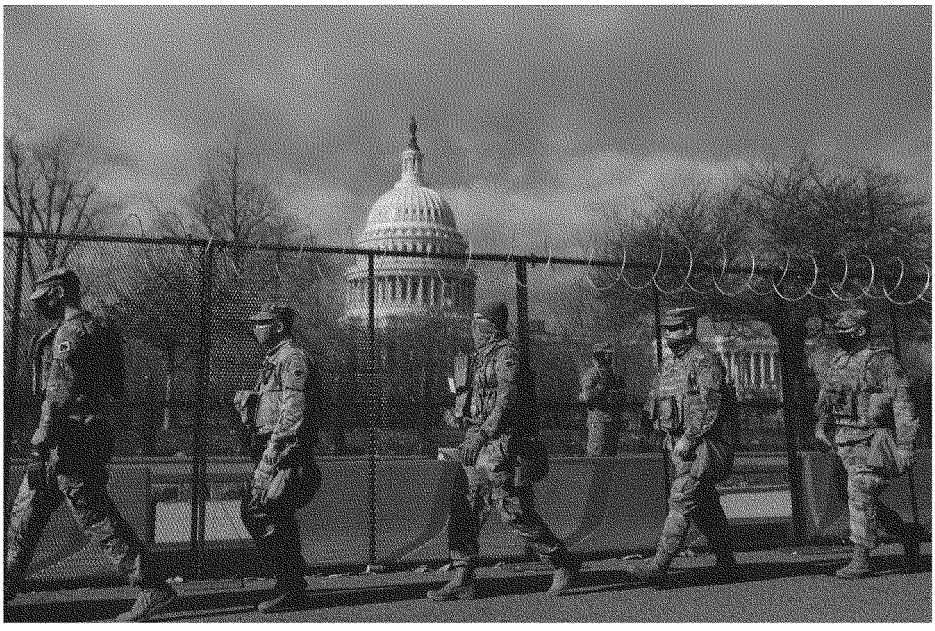
12 National Guard members with ties to militia groups or 'extremist views' removed from inauguration

independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/national-guard-biden-inauguration-militia-b1789535.html

January 19, 2021



Leer en Español

At least 12 National Guard service members have been removed from president-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, including two people who made "inappropriate" comments about the event.

The discovery follows Defense Department and FBI efforts to screen National Guard members as more than 20,000 troops support law enforcement in Washington DC ahead of the swearing-in ceremony, days after a far-right mob breached the US Capitol.

Two service members were identified for posting "inappropriate comments or texts" about the event, Army General Daniel Hokanson told reporters on Tuesday afternoon. At least 10 others were identified by the FBI "as having ties to fringe right-wing groups or had posted extremist views", according to the Associated Press.

"I'm not concerned as a large part of our organisation, if you look at 25,000, we've had 12 identified and some of those they are just looking into, it may be unrelated to this, but we want to make sure out of an abundance of caution, as I stated earlier, that we do the right thing until that gets cleared up," General Hokanson told reporters.

Pentagon officials did not disclose details about the service members. Spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said that "much of the information" is "unrelated to the events taking place at the Capitol or to the concerns that many people have noted on extremism."

"These are vetting efforts that identify any questionable behavior in the past or any potential link to questionable behavior, not just related to extremism," he told reporters.

Federal authorities have identified a growing number of law enforcement and military personnel who joined the insurrection on 6 January.

In a statement on Monday, acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller said that while it's "normal" to vet service members for "large security events" like the inauguration ceremony on Wednesday, the Pentagon has "no intelligence indicating an insider threat". The FBI is assisting with screening efforts.

"We are leaving no stone unturned in securing the capital," he said. "However, in this case the scope of military participation is unique. The DC National Guard is also providing additional training to service members as they arrive in DC that if they see or hear something that is not appropriate, they should report it to their chain of command."

More than 30 police officers from more than a dozen states participated in the rally that incited the riot to support Donald Trump's attempt to overturn the 2020 presidential election, and several other officers – as well as US military veterans – joined the mob inside the Capitol, underscoring warnings from civil rights groups about the far-right radicalisation inside law enforcement departments across the US.

On Monday, FBI agents also arrested two members of the Joint Terrorism Task Force at its Boston field for their "alleged roles in connection" to the Capitol insurrection.

Federal law enforcement has identified at least six people with military histories now in federal custody from its sprawling investigation into rioters. That includes a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel, a US Army officer and an Army reservist. An Air Force veteran was killed by Capitol Police during the attack.

The Pentagon and Justice Department now are acting with relative urgency after civil rights group as well as federal agencies have sounded alarms about the rising threats of far-right violence and white supremacist groups.

The Associated Press cited a US Army official and a senior intelligence official with knowledge of the troops' removal and extremist ties. It was not immediately clear on Tuesday which states the two service members were from or what militia groups they are connected to.

Heightened security throughout the nation's capital surrounding the inauguration follows intelligence warnings among federal law enforcement in the wake of the attack on the Capitol.

The attacks in Washington DC and the deaths of rioters will "very likely serve as a significant driver of violence" and galvanise groups and inspire "more sporadic, lone-actor or small-cell violence" against others, according to the bulletin, released by the FBI, Justice Department, Department of Homeland Security and National Counterterrorism Center.

The latest bulletin, dated 13 January, says those groups "very likely pose the greatest domestic terrorism threats in 2021."

Comments

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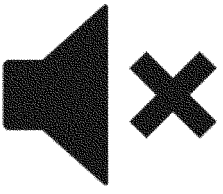
GOP senator: Trump 'committed impeachable offenses'

thehill.com/homenews/senate/533498-gop-sen-toomey-trump-committed-impeachable-offenses

Alexander Bolton January 9, 2021



Sen. Pat ToomeyPatrick (Pat) Joseph ToomeyGovernment used Patriot Act to gather website visitor logs in 2019 Appeals court rules NSA's bulk phone data collection illegal Dunford withdraws from consideration to chair coronavirus oversight panel MORE (R-Pa.), who has played a leading role in opposing efforts to throw out the results of the 2020 election, on Saturday said President TrumpDonald TrumpClinton, Bush, Obama reflect on peaceful transition of power on Biden's Inauguration Day Arizona Republican's brothers say he is 'at least partially to blame' for Capitol violence Biden reverses Trump's freeze on .4 billion in funds MORE has "committed impeachable offenses."





"I do think the president committed impeachable offenses," Toomey said during an interview on Fox News's "The Journal Editorial Report."

Toomey is the top-ranking Republican on the Senate Banking Committee. He plans to retire from Congress at the end of 2022 to return to the private sector.

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Toomey said he did not know whether the Senate would act on any articles of impeachment passed by the House during the final 11 days of Trump's term in office and voiced concern that Democrats may try to "politicize" the process.

"I don't know what they are going to send over, and one of the things that I'm concerned about, frankly, is whether the House would completely politicize something," he said.

While Toomey said he believes Trump "committed impeachable offenses," he added, "I don't know what's going to land on the Senate floor if anything."



Speaker Nancy PelosiNancy PelosiGOP operative installed as NSA top lawyer placed on administrative leave: reports Budowsky: Democracy won, Trump lost, President Biden inaugurated Biden taps career civil servants to acting posts at State, USAID, UN MORE (D-Calif.) wrote in a letter to colleagues Friday that if Trump does not leave office "imminently and willingly," the House will proceed with action.

During a phone call that lasted more than three hours on Friday afternoon, an overwhelming majority of House Democrats voiced support for impeaching Trump for a second time.

Pelosi expressed hope that the threat of impeachment would mobilize Trump's Cabinet to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove him from office.

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Pelosi had not announced as of Saturday afternoon a final decision on how the House will move forward.



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnellAddison (Mitch) Mitchell McConnellBudowsky: Democracy won, Trump lost, President Biden inaugurated Biden's inauguration marked by conflict of hope and fear McConnell faces conservative backlash over Trump criticism MORE (R-Ky.) on Friday circulated a memo laying out the procedures for another impeachment trial if the House votes a second time to impeach Trump.

McConnell's memo stated that while the Senate could receive a message from the House informing the upper chamber that it has passed articles of impeachment, the secretary of the Senate could not notify the Senate of the message until Jan. 19, when the senators are scheduled to return from a recess.

As a result, the House impeachment managers could not exhibit the articles of impeachment on the Senate floor until Jan. 19 unless all 100 senators agree to allow business to take place before the recess is scheduled to end — an unlikely possibility, according to McConnell's memo.

The Senate's impeachment rules do not allow the upper chamber to begin the trial until one day after the House impeachment managers exhibit the articles of impeachment, which means another trial couldn't begin before 1 p.m. on Jan. 20, after Joe BidenJoe BidenKaty Perry and her 'Firework' close out inauguration TV special Arizona Republican's brothers say he is 'at least partially to blame' for Capitol violence Tom Hanks: After years of 'troubling rancor,' Inauguration Day 'is about witnessing the permanence of our American ideal' MORE is sworn in as president — unless all 100 senators agree to return earlier.



McConnell's memo stated that it's not clear whether Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts would preside over Trump's second impeachment trial, if it happened, because he would no longer be president when it started.

Two other Republican senators have expressed willingness to remove Trump from office over what they see as his role in whipping up a pro-Trump mob that stormed the Capitol Friday.

Sen. Ben SasseBen SasseBudowsky: Democracy won, Trump lost, President Biden inaugurated Pompeo labels China's treatment of Uighurs 'genocide' GOP senators wrestle with purging Trump from party MORE (R-Neb.) told "CBS This Morning" that if the House comes together on an impeachment process, "I will definitely consider whatever articles they might move because, as I told you, I believe the president has disregarded his oath of office."



Sasse said he "swore an oath to the American people to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution" and that Trump "acted against that."

Sasse later said he heard from senior White House officials that Trump was "delighted" to learn that his supporters broke into the Capitol building. The melee resulted in the death of a Capitol police officer and several rioters.

Sen. Lisa MurkowskiLisa Ann MurkowskiMcConnell faces conservative backlash over Trump criticism GOP senators praise Biden's inauguration speech Biden urges Americans to join together in appeal for unity MORE (R-Alaska) told the Anchorage Daily News on Friday that Trump should resign.



"I want him to resign. I want him out. He has caused enough damage," she said.

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Toomey said in the interview that aired Saturday that Trump's false claims of widespread election fraud cost Republicans control of the Senate by depressing GOP turnout in two runoff races in Georgia.

"We lost those races because the races were about Donald Trump and not about our candidates. I think we had better candidates. He had a very, very good rationale to present to the voters, which is you don't want to risk the Democrats who have gone to this extreme left in recent years, you don't want to give them power," he said.

But Toomey said that message "got eclipsed."

"We had turnout problems. It's hard to turn out voters when you're telling them that the election is rigged against them anyway. It's not a great message to inspire people to go to the polls," he said. "I think we could have won both of those races."

Toomey defended McConnell's handling of Republican objections to electoral votes for Biden in Arizona and Pennsylvania.

The GOP leader warned his colleagues not to support objections to electoral votes, which he argued would put fellow Republicans in a tough spot and undermine states' rights to set their own election rules.

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"Mitch McConnell has been handling some very, very difficult circumstances about as well as anybody could," Toomey said. "He knew that it was a very bad idea to go down this road of rejecting electors that states had duly authorized, and he made the case for why we shouldn't go down that road."

Asked if Senate Republican colleagues bore some responsibility for a pro-Trump mob storming the Capitol on Wednesday when Congress was counting the Electoral College vote, Toomey said, "I think there's a lot of soul searching that's going to have to happen."

"There are people who perpetrated the big lie that Donald Trump won in a landslide and it's all been stolen from him. That's not true," he said.

He said there was "a compounding of dishonesty" by people who propagated the idea that Congress's tallying of the Electoral College vote on Wednesday "could result in a different outcome and therefore it was reasonable to try to pressure lawmakers."

"That was never going to happen. That was never possible. And so to willfully mislead people about that, that's a real problem," Toomey added.

Updated 5:52 p.m.

Tags Mitch McConnell Ben Sasse Pat Toomey Lisa Murkowski Donald Trump Joe Biden Nancy Pelosi Impeachment Capitol Riots Capitol breach Trump impeachment

Man who allegedly broke into Pelosi's office charged with 3 federal counts

abcnews.go.com/Politics/man-broke-pelosis-office-charged-federal-counts/story



He was arrested Friday morning in Little Rock, Arkansas.

6:21

US Capitol riots: Tracking the insurrection

On Jan. 6, rioters coming from a pro-Trump rally broke into the U.S. Capitol, resulting in deaths, injuries, arrests and vandalism.

Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA via Shutterstock
Richard Barnett, the man who allegedly broke into House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office, posed for pictures and stole mail from her desk, was arrested Friday morning in Little Rock, Arkansas, and has been charged with three federal counts.

Barnett allegedly entered the restricted office area and took photographs with his feet propped up on furniture, according to a criminal complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C.

Barnett, who goes by the name "Bigo," was captured in news media photographs and took an envelope off of Pelosi's desk addressed to Rep. Billy Long, R-Mo., the complaint says.

Saul Loeb, a staff photographer at Agence France Presse, was the one who snapped the now-infamous photograph of Barnett behind the desk in Pelosi's office.

"[Barnett] was sitting at her, at a staff member's desk, in her office with his feet up, just making himself at home, you know, just sort of like he owned the place," Loeb told ABC News. "Here you have Nancy Pelosi, one of the highest members of the U.S. government, and this theoretically highly secure location in this highly secure building and these people are just basically doing whatever they want and looking whatever they want."

Saul Loeb/AFP via Getty Images
A supporter of President Donald Trump sits inside the office of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi after protesters broached the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., Jan. 6, 2021, as Congress met to certify the a 2020 presidential election.

Barnett was charged with entering a restricted building, violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds, and stealing public property.

"The shocking images of Mr. Barnett with his boots up on a desk in the Speaker of the House's office on Wednesday was repulsive," said Jeffrey A. Rosen, acting attorney general of the United States.

Loeb said when he encountered rioters, they wanted to have their picture taken and would often pose for photographers like himself.

MORE: West Virginia lawmaker charged after filming himself at pro-Trump siege inside Capitol

"They were taking lots of selfies of themselves. You know, they just sort of seemed like happy to be there, sort of surprised that they were there, I would guess," said Loeb.

Recently elected West Virginia state Republican lawmaker Derrick Evans was also charged with one count of knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority and one count of violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol Grounds after he allegedly recorded himself in a video entering the Capitol.

Evans allegedly streamed a live video to his Facebook page of him "joining and encouraging a crowd unlawfully entering the U.S. Capitol," according to the US Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia.

The office alleges that the video shows Evans entering the U.S. Capitol and shouting, "We're in, we're in! Derrick Evans is in the Capitol!"

On Saturday, Evans resigned from the West Virginia House of Delegates, effective immediately.

"The past few days have certainly been a difficult time for my family, colleagues and myself, so I feel it's best at this point to resign my seat in the House and focus on my personal situation and those I love," Evans said in a statement. "I take full responsibility for my actions, and deeply regret any hurt, pain or embarrassment I may have caused my family, friends, constituents and fellow West Virginians."

Several others also face charges.

Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA via Shutterstock
Richard Bigo Barnett takes a seat in the office of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi after breaching Capitol security during a protest against Congress certifying Joe Biden as the next president in Washington, Jan 6, 2021.

On Wednesday, Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Chief Robert Contee said that there were Molotov cocktails found in the cooler of a truck. On Friday, Lonnie Coffman was arrested for allegedly possessing them.

While K-9 units were searching for explosives at the Republican National Committee and Democratic National Committee, they got a hit on what allegedly was Coffman's truck -- and upon approaching the truck they saw the handle of a handgun that was ultimately recovered from the passenger seat, according to a complaint.

MORE: An attempted murderer, a lawmaker, white supremacists: Arrest records shed light on those arrested in Capitol siege
Officers also allegedly recovered 11 mason jars containing an unknown liquid with a golf tee on the top of each jar, cloth rags and lighters.

"Upon finding these materials, bomb technicians observed that the items appeared to be consistent with components for an explosive or incendiary device known as a 'Molotov Cocktail," the complaint says.

Washington County Sheriff's Office via Getty Images
Richard Barnett is shown in a booking photo released courtesy of Washington County Sheriffs Office, Jan. 8, 2021.

Coffman was sitting in the passenger seat of someone else's car and asked officers whether the bombs from the RNC and DNC were cleared, according to the complaint.

Officers then asked his name and he said it was Lonnie. They then detained him because his matched the name of the owner of the truck. After further questioning he was arrested when they found a handgun and, in his pocket, the keys to the truck that contained the alleged

Molotov cocktails. It is alleged that Coffman's vehicle contained 11 Molotov cocktails and firearms.

Coffman is not believed to be a suspect in the placement of pipe bombs outside the RNC and DNC, the complaint says. But he was charged Friday with possession of an unregistered firearm (destructive device) and carrying a pistol without a license.

MORE: Twitter permanently suspends Donald Trump's account

Christopher Michael Alberts was one of the protesters who stormed the Capitol and was "slow in responding to orders to leave the premises," according to a complaint. That is when a Capitol Police quoted in the complaint said he noticed Alberts had a handgun on his hip and was wearing a bulletproof vest and a backpack. Alberts tried to flee when officers noticed his weapon, but officers detained him quickly, according to the complaint.

"A black Taurus G2C 9mm was recovered from D-1's right hip. Additionally, a separate magazine was located on D-1's left hip. Both the gun and the spare magazine were in held in two separate holsters. The handgun had one round in the chamber with a twelve round capacity magazine filled with twelve rounds; the spare magazine also had a twelve round capacity and was filled with twelve rounds. MPD Officers also seized a gas-mask from the defendant's person as well as the defendant's backpack containing a pocketknife, one packaged military meal-ready to eat (MRE), and one first-aid medical kit," the complaint says.

Alberts was charged with carrying a firearm on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol.

Matthew Rosenberg/The New York Times via Redux

Richard "Bigo" Barnett, 60, from Gravette, Ark., shows off the envelope he took from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office at the Capitol in Washington, after a mob supporting President Donald Trump broke into the building and disrupted the confirmation of President-elect Joe Biden's election, Jan. 6, 2021.

Mark Leffingwell was in the U.S. Capitol building and attempted to push past the officers who secured a barrier, according to his complaint.

"When he was deterred from advancing further into the building, Leffingwell punched me repeatedly with a closed fist. I was struck in the helmet that I was wearing and in the chest," an officer said in the complaint.

The complaint also adds that he apologized to the officer he struck, but was still arrested.

Leffingwell was charged Thursday with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority, assault on a federal law enforcement officer, and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds.

MORE: American diplomats sign 'dissent cable' over Trump remarks as White House fires official who said Trump must 'go'

Joshua Pruitt was arrested for not complying with the Washington, D.C., mayor's 6 p.m. curfew, according to his complaint.

While at the processing center, court documents say, a Metropolitan Police Department investigator noticed his picture matched one on The Washington Post website and identified him as someone who was allegedly in the Capitol.

When officers asked Pruitt if it was him in the Capitol, he said said it was and that he was only attempting to de-escalate the situation. He was charged Thursday with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority.

Editor's Note: This story has been updated with additional arrests and charges and corrects that charging information came from criminal complaints, not indictments.

U.S. foes like China and Iran see opportunity in the chaos of Trump-stoked riot at Capitol

nbcnews.com/news/world/u-s-foes-china-iran-see-opportunity-chaos-trump-stoked-n1253318

January 8, 2021



Jan. 8, 2021, 9:32 AM UTC

By Alexander Smith and Saphora Smith

LONDON — For America's adversaries, there was no greater proof of the fallibility of Western democracy than the sight of the U.S. Capitol shrouded in smoke and besieged by a mob whipped up by their unwillingly outgoing president.

Already China, Iran and Russia have pointed to the tumult in Washington as evidence that the much-vaunted U.S. system of government is fundamentally flawed and riddled with hypocrisy.

Across Europe there is grave concern, too. Not just at the division and instability rocking their powerful trans-Atlantic ally, but also at what it means for their relationship with Washington after President-elect Joe Biden is inaugurated in two weeks.

Many question how the U.S. can ever again lecture other countries about democratic values or how it can tell other countries that they aren't internally stable enough to have nuclear weapons.

Protesters enter the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday.Win McNamee / Getty Images

"You are now seeing the situation in the U.S.," Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a live televised speech Friday. "This is their democracy and human rights, this is their election scandal, these are their values. These values are being mocked by the whole world. Even their friends are laughing at them."

While Iran criticized, its government in Tehran has clamped down on its own people's rights of freedom of expression and assembly, and its security forces have used lethal force to crush protests, killing hundreds of people and arbitrarily detaining thousands more, according to Amnesty International in London.

In China and Russia, officials asked why U.S. lawmakers have been so quick to support pro-democracy protesters in other parts of the world while unrest rages in their own streets.

"You may all remember the words that some U.S. officials, legislators and some media used about Hong Kong then," China's Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson, Hua Chunying, said at a briefing Thursday. "What do they say about the United States now?"

Police in Hong Kong arrested more than 50 pro-democracy figures Wednesday for allegedly violating the stringent new national security law. Antony Blinken, Biden's nominee for secretary of state, said on Twitter this week that the new administration would "stand with the people of Hong Kong and against Beijing's crackdown on democracy."

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In Russia, Leonid Slutsky, chair of the foreign affairs committee of the lower house of Parliament, told state media that "the boomerang of the 'color revolutions,' as we can see, is returning to the United States," referring to the wave of Western-endorsed democratic uprisings across former Soviet republics in the 2000s.

Plenty of people have pointed out that many of the demonstrators — in the former Soviet republics and Hong Kong — were advocating for more democratic rights. Under President Vladimir Putin, the rights of regular Russians have been severely eroded, according to monitors.

The mob at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, however, was seeking to overturn a legitimate election.

The distinction hasn't stopped America's detractors from making a vivid comparison.

"This an absolute gift for authoritarian leaders whose prime narrative is that democratic systems are weak and unstable," said Matthew Harries, a Berlin-based senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, a think tank.

"Someone like Xi Jinping can say: Look, these people can't get a grip on Covid-19 and they can't even protect their legislature," he said, referring to China's leader, whereas with the Chinese Communist Party "you get stability and growth."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., echoed that sentiment Thursday, calling Trump "a complete tool of Putin" and saying that by encouraging the Capitol riot the president gave "the biggest of all of his many gifts" to the Russian president.

A flag that reads "Treason" on the ground early Thursday after protesters stormed the U.S. Capitol.Andrew Harnik / AP

Victor Gao, who was an interpreter for China's late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, said the scenes in Washington were a vivid riposte to those wanting to transplant American political values elsewhere.

"Our system has its own problems, but this system for China works for China for the past 45 years," he said of the one-party state. "China will never accept any attempt by the United States to impose its system onto China because it doesn't work" for China.

Although President Donald Trump has spoken warmly about Xi, he has also hit China with tariffs and sanctions for what the U.S. says is its restriction of Hong Kong's autonomy and its human rights abuses against the Uighur Muslims, both of which Beijing contests.

Perhaps the most notable recent attempt to export an American-style democracy was in Iraq, with institution-building being one of the stated aims of the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. After Wednesday's events, a meme circulating showed Iraq tanks launching an invasion "to bring democracy back to the United States."

"It has been 20 years since George W. Bush tried to export American democracy as a model for the rest of the world, and these days this model is in deep crisis," said Giovanni Orsina, director of the School of Government at Luiss Guido Carli University in Rome.

"After what we saw, the idea that Americans can teach democracy to the rest of the world is a lot weaker," he said. "And to make matters worse is the fact that there are no great alternative democracies out there — so America's crisis reflects a crisis of democracy in the world."

The front pages of Italian newspapers Thursday. Andrew Medichini / AP

The sense of a shared crisis was clear in the statements of alarm by several European leaders. The U.S. is far from the only country grappling with its populist right, fueled by disinformation conspiracy theories online.

"Inflammatory words turn into violent acts — on the steps of the Reichstag, and now in the Capitol," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas tweeted, referring to an attempt by anti-coronavirus lockdown protesters to storm the German Parliament in August. "The disdain for democratic institutions is devastating."

After a bruising few years of Trump, few European leaders have kidded themselves that Biden's win means they can go back to the way things were. There are moves headed by French President Emmanuel Macron, for example, to become less reliant on Washington militarily.

And yet this week's events in Washington have brought the future of their relationship with the U.S. into sharp focus.

In Paris, François Heisbourg, a senior adviser for Europe at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said, "The outside world has to assume there is an uncertainty, a high degree of instability as to where the U.S. will be in the next few years."

European powers "have to assume the fate of the U.S. is uncertain," he said. "And if that is the case, we have to prepare for a world in which the U.S. is not the partner that we use to have."

Alexander Smith reported from London; Saphora Smith from Bristol, England; Claudio Lavanga from Rome; Nancy Ing from Paris; Andy Eckardt from Mainz, Germany; Tatyana Chistikova from Moscow; and Dawn Liu from Beijing.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump legal team's batch of false vote claims

AP apnews.com/article/fact-check-trump-legal-team-false-claims-5abd64917ef8be9e9e2078180973e8b3

November 19, 2020



ADVERTISEMENT

By ALI SWENSONNovember 19, 2020 GMT

1 of 4

Former Mayor of New York Rudy Giuliani, a lawyer for President Donald Trump, speaks during a news conference at the Republican National Committee headquarters, Thursday Nov. 19, 2020, in Washington. Giuliani is jokingly "looking for the FBI" under the dais in response to a reporters question about where the FBI has been in all this. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

1 of 4

Former Mayor of New York Rudy Giuliani, a lawyer for President Donald Trump, speaks during a news conference at the Republican National Committee headquarters, Thursday Nov. 19, 2020, in Washington. Giuliani is jokingly "looking for the FBI" under the dais in

response to a reporters question about where the FBI has been in all this. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

Despite a lack of evidence of widespread irregularities or fraud, President Donald Trump's legal team used a Thursday press conference to go through a laundry list of far-fetched, thoroughly debunked claims on the 2020 election.

Trump attorney Sidney Powell spun fictional tales of election systems flipping votes, German servers storing U.S. voting information and election software created in Venezuela "at the direction of Hugo Chavez" — the late Venezuelan president who died in 2013. She also said Trump beat Democrat Joe Biden "by a landslide," which he decidedly didn't — Biden was the clear winner.

A look at the claims and reality:

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POWELL: "The Dominion Voting Systems, the Smartmatic technology software, and the software that goes in other computerized voting systems here as well, not just Dominion, were created in Venezuela at the direction of Hugo Chavez to make sure he never lost an election after one constitutional referendum came out the way he did not want it to come out."

THE FACTS: No, Dominion does not have any ties to Venezuela, nor does it have a partnership with Smartmatic, according to Eddie Perez, a voting technology expert at the OSET Institute, a nonpartisan election technology research and development nonprofit.

Smartmatic is an international company incorporated in Florida by Venezuelan founders. The company states on its website that it's not associated with governments or political parties of any country.

Full Coverage: AP Fact Check

POWELL: "One of (the software's) most characteristic features is its ability to flip votes. It can set and run an algorithm that probably ran all over the country to take a certain percentage of votes from President Trump and flip them to President Biden."

THE FACTS: That didn't happen. There's no evidence that any of Dominion's systems switched votes for Trump to count as votes for Biden. A statement released by the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, a federal agency that oversees U.S. election security, says there's no truth to claims that votes cast for Trump were switched to count for Biden or deleted.

POWELL, on reports that a U.S. voting server is in Germany: "That is true, it's somehow related to this but I do not know whether good guys got it or bad guys got it."

THE FACTS: No, it's not true. Powell is referencing a fictitious story that a server hosting evidence of voting irregularities in the Nov. 3 U.S. election was in Germany.

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Republican Rep. Louie Gohmert of Texas claimed last week that "U.S. Army forces" seized a server from a Frankfurt office. An Army spokesman described allegations that the Army had recovered servers in Germany as false.

Two voting software companies that conspiracy theorists said were linked to the German server — Scytl and Dominion — have both released statements denying those claims.

POWELL: "President Trump won by a landslide."

THE FACTS: That's false. Biden has an Electoral College lead of 306 to 232 after The Associated Press on Thursday declared him the winner in Georgia. That's the same margin Trump had in 2016. Back then, Trump described it as a "landslide." Biden also leads the popular vote by nearly 6 million votes.

Associated Press writers Jude Joffe-Block in Phoenix and Amanda Seitz in Chicago contributed to this report.

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

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Pennsylvania GOP Lawmakers Make Clear They Won't Overturn The Election As Trump Wants

forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2020/12/03/pennsylvania-gop-lawmakers-make-clear-they-wont-overturn-the-election-as-trump-wants/

December 3, 2020





Election 2020|Dec 3, 2020,07:44pm EST|
Updated Dec 4, 2020, 04:09pm EST

Topline

Republican state lawmakers in Pennsylvania will not make any attempt to overturn the state's popular vote by appointing their own presidential electors, the legislature's leadership said in a statement Thursday, killing the Trump campaign's hopes of contesting President-elect Joe Biden's win in the state even as other Pennsylvania Republicans take an election challenge to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Rudy Giuliani speaks as Trump campaign advisor Jenna Ellis looks on during a Pennsylvania Senate ... [+] Majority Policy Committee public hearing at the Wyndham Gettysburg Hotel on November 25, 2020 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. (Photo by Samuel Corum/Getty Images)
Getty Images

Key Facts

Pennsylvania Senate President Pro Tempore Jake Corman, House Speaker Bryan Cutler, Senate Majority Leader Kim Ward and House Majority Leader Kerry Benninghoff said they "cannot take steps to appoint electors for this election," as the Trump campaign has expressly asked state lawmakers to do.

The Trump campaign pushed the tactic at a recent unofficial hearing with some Pennsylvania Republicans and has asked the courts to order that lawmakers step in, as part of a broader long-shot strategy targeting GOP-led legislatures in battleground states that elected Biden.

The lawmakers said the state legislature "lacks the authority...to overturn the popular vote" by appointing its own electors and would violate Pennsylvania's Election Code and Constitution if they did, as well as set a bad precedent.

The Republicans debunked the Trump campaign legal team's argument claiming lawmakers can appoint their own electors under Article II of the U.S. Constitution, noting that while the Constitution says states appoint electors "in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct," they've already done that by enshrining in the Pennsylvania Election Code that electors are appointed by the popular vote.

The state legislature was already expected to reject the Trump campaign's request to appoint electors, previously adjourning their session without taking up a resolution that challenged the election result, but Thursday's comments mark the clearest and most official statement yet that the state legislature will not pursue the strategy.

Lawmakers made clear they will continue to investigate alleged issues with the general election, and Pennsylvania Republicans called on the state's congressional delegation Friday to oppose the election results in Congress, though that strategy is highly unlikely to succeed.

Chief Critic

Giuliani accused the Pennsylvania lawmakers Friday of "covering up for [Democrats'] crimes," saying on Twitter that the GOP legislature "let down America." "I'm ashamed of them. They completely misled the President and me," Giuliani tweeted, calling on Republicans to "let them know what we think of them."

What To Watch For

There are still a few outstanding legal challenges taking aim at Pennsylvania's election result. Several down-ballot Republican candidates in Pennsylvania, including U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly, asked the U.S. Supreme Court Thursday to weigh in on a lawsuit that seeks to block the election from being certified, after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled against the Republican plaintiffs. Experts largely expect the litigation to fail, with election law scholar Rick Hasen saying the Supreme Court appeal "contains the dumbest argument I've ever seen in an emergency petition." Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito called for Pennsylvania to file its response in that case by Dec. 9, which legal experts believe is likely a sign the case is dead in the water, as that is one day after a "safe harbor" deadline for election results on Dec. 8 that will make it much harder to change the election outcome. Trump campaign legal advisor

Jenna Ellis also said Nov. 27 the Trump campaign would appeal its lawsuit contesting Pennsylvania's election to the Supreme Court after a federal appeals court threw out the case, but the campaign has not done so yet.

Key Background

The Trump campaign pivoted its post-election strategy to focus on state lawmakers overturning the popular vote following repeated losses in its battleground state lawsuits, even as GOP lawmakers in a number of states have made comments opposing the strategy and experts say it is extremely unlikely to work. In addition to Pennsylvania, Giuliani and Ellis have also urged lawmakers in Arizona, Michigan and Georgia to take the election into their own hands at recent hearings, but there is no indication their efforts will succeed in any state. All four states, along with the other battleground states of Nevada and Wisconsin, have already certified their presidential election results.

Further Reading

Here's How The Trump Campaign Is Still Trying To Overturn Biden's Victory (Forbes)

'Not How The Constitution Works': Trump Campaign's Biggest Election Lawsuit Fails In Court (Forbes)

Last gasp effort by Pa. House Republicans to involve state Legislature in recall of presidential election results fizzle (Penn Live)

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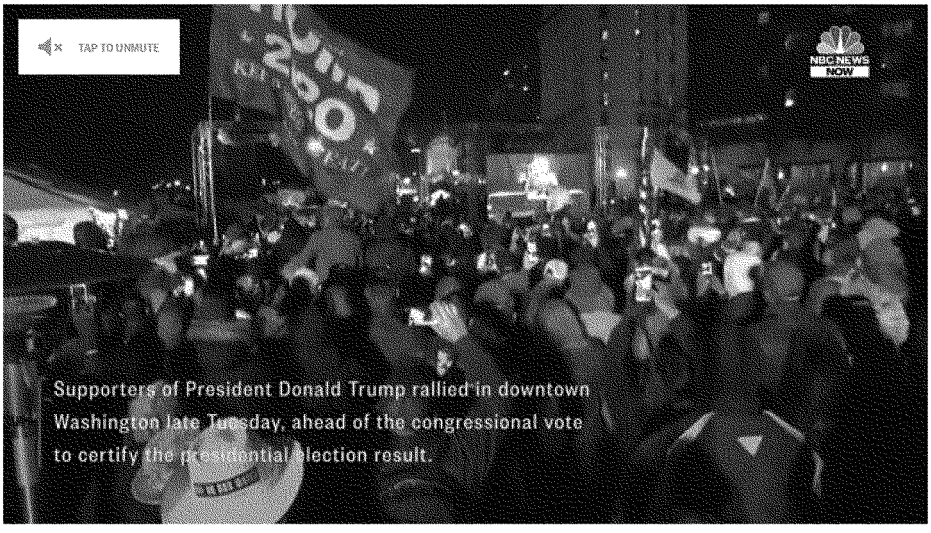
DONALD TRUMP

D.C. Police make several arrests ahead of major pro-Trump election protest

Protesters remained out in the street well into the night, with videos on social media showing some clashing with police.



Jan. 5, 2021, 11:59 PM EST / Updated Jan. 6, 2021, 6:08 AM EST

By Allan Smith

WASHINGTON – Several people were arrested in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday in connection to protests ahead of Congress' certification of the Electoral College votes on Wednesday.

Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police said six arrests were made as of 9 p.m. ET, including some involving multiple charges. Those charges included a handful that were weapons-related, including carrying firearms without a license, possession of unregistered ammunition and possession of an unregistered firearm. Protesters were also charged with assaulting a police officer and simple assault.



— Supporters of President Donald Trump gather in protest downtown on Wednesday on Jan. 5, 2021 in Washington, DC. Spencer Platt / Getty Images

Tuesday's rallies in support of President Donald Trump, who refuses to accept his November electoral loss to President-elect Joe Biden, featured an array of conservative speakers and drew in throngs of Trump supporters who traveled to the nation's capital ahead of Wednesday's proceedings.

Though the formal events ended earlier Tuesday, protesters remained out in the street well into the night, with videos on social media showing some clashing with police.

The main draw will take place Wednesday morning ahead of the congressional gathering, where the president himself will address a protest outside the White House dubbed the "March for Trump/Save America" rally. Thousands are expected to attend that event, which was organized by the pro-Trump group Women for America First.

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Supporters of President Donald Trump gather in the rain for a rally at Freedom Plaza on Jan. 5, 2021 in Washington, DC. Samuel Corum / Getty Images

The president has made a slew of unsuccessful efforts to overturn his loss both through lawsuits and attempts to convince state legislatures to ignore the vote in their states and appoint pro-Trump electors. As his final Hail Mary, the president has sought to rev his supporters up over the

Jan. 6 certification, claiming that it presents the opportunity for Congress to overturn the election. With Democrats in control of the House and dozens of GOP senators opposing the effort, that plot is doomed to fail as well.

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The president has also turned up the heat on Vice President Mike Pence, who will preside over the ceremony, claiming he can intervene in the count. But the ceremonial role does not provide Pence with such powers.

Still, Trump's most ardent supporters have heeded his call. In anticipation of possible violence, Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser mobilized the National Guard and increased police presence.

The nation's capital has seen similarly large and, at times, chaotic protests earlier this year after Minneapolis police killed George Floyd.



Allan Smith

Allan Smith is a political reporter for NBC News.

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NEWS MSNBC TODAY

Capitol Police officer who was on duty during the riot has died by suicide, his family says

washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/liebengood-capitol-police-death/2021/01/10/3a495b84-5357-11eb-a08b-f1381ef3d207_story.html

By Allison Klein and Rebecca Tan

January 10, 2021



U.S. Capitol Police officer Howard Liebengood — the son and namesake of a former Senate Sergeant-at-Arms, lobbyist and Hill staffer — took his own life on Saturday, days after a mob breached the Capitol, a spokesman for his family said Monday.

Liebengood, 51, who went by "Howie," had been an officer guarding the Capitol since 2005. The agency did not list a cause of when it announced Liebengood's death, but a spokesman for the family confirmed Monday that he died by suicide and had been on duty at the Capitol on Wednesday.

"His death is a tragedy that has deprived all of us a dedicated public servant," Barry Pollack, a lawyer representing the Liebengood family, said in a statement. "His family has suffered a devastating loss and asks that they be given space to grieve in private."

Pollack said that Liebengood is survived by his wife and siblings.

Liebengood, who grew up in Fairfax County and was a race car driver before joining the police force, was assigned to the Senate Division. A former co-worker said he often worked at the Delaware entrance of the Russell Senate Office Building — his favorite posting.

His death was the second of a Capitol Police officer in the span of a week: On Wednesday, Officer Brian D. Sicknick died of injuries sustained while fighting off the "Stop the Steal" mob that had breached the Capitol while lawmakers were certifying the presidential vote.

Four civilians also died in the confrontation — one shot by a police officer and three in medical emergencies — and dozens of officers were beaten and injured.

"We are reeling from the death of Officer Liebengood," Gus Papathanasiou, head of the Capitol Police union, said in a statement on Sunday. "Officer Liebengood was an example of the selfless service that is the hallmark of USCP."

A statement Sunday from the Capitol Police says: "Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family, friends, and colleagues."

On Sunday, President Trump ordered flags lowered to half-staff in honor of both Sicknick and Liebengood. Scores of officers lined up outside the Capitol and saluted as a hearse carrying Sicknick's remains passed by.

On social media, there was a fresh outpouring of grief. Rep. Jennifer Wexton (D-Va.) posted on Twitter that she was "deeply saddened" over the death of Liebengood, who was her constituent.

"Officer Liebengood served with USCP for 15 years, continuing a family tradition of protecting the U.S. Senate," she wrote. "My heart breaks for his family, his loved ones, & our community."

Former senator and secretary of state John F. Kerry (D-Mass.) called the deaths of Sicknick and Liebengood "a tragic loss of two patriots who spent their careers protecting the halls of democracy."

Friends described Liebengood as humble and reserved, and said he shared a love of racecar driving with his late father, as well as a pull toward the halls of the Capitol.

Charlie Ostlund, 70, taught Liebengood at James Madison High School in Vienna, Va., in the 1980s, and was his wrestling coach. He remembered Liebengood as a team player who often surprised opponents with his strength and physical talent.

Ostlund said the younger Liebengood looked up to his father, Howard S. Liebengood Sr., who served from 1981 to 1983 as Senate sergeant at arms, charged with ensuring security in the Capitol and Senate buildings, as well as protecting members of the Senate.

In a 2003 interview with a motorsports website, the younger Liebengood said his parents were his biggest inspiration. My father "has accomplished so much in his professional career in government and the political arena," he said at the time. "If I could accomplish an [eighth] of what he has accomplished, I would be very proud . . . he is my hero!"

Liebengood told his interviewer he was involved in the National Campaign to Stop Violence, an effort aimed at middle-schoolers.

"He was a great student and great kid," Ostlund said. "This is just so, so sad."

Liebengood Sr. left his post as sergeant at arms to become a lobbyist, eventually starting his own firm with another former Hill staffer. In 2001, he returned to Capitol Hill as chief of staff to his longtime friend, Sen. Fred D. Thompson (R-Tenn.), and later to then-Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.). He died of a heart attack on Jan. 13, 2005, two weeks shy of his planned retirement.

On the Senate floor after his death, Frist said the elder Liebengood "loved the Senate," according to a 2005 transcript. "He loved the purpose of this institution; he loved its tradition; and, above all, he loved its people. The Senate was his extended family."

A classmate and wrestling teammate of the younger Liebengood, Stu Wilkinson, said his friend's relationship with Washington's political elite dates back to their childhood — though he didn't brag about it.

He recalled a school trip to the White House in the 1980s, when Secret Service officers took Liebengood aside to have him speak with then-Senate Majority Leader Howard Henry Baker Jr. (R-Tenn.).

"Here comes Senator Baker shaking Howie's hand," Wilkinson said. "[Liebengood] was so humble. . . . None of us had any clue how they knew each other."

Wilkinson said that when he saw news reports of the Capitol riots on Wednesday, his mind went straight to Liebengood. He scanned the television footage, hoping his friend was all right. "He was an outstanding guy," Wilkinson said. "A quiet, silent leader."

Bill Beck, 80, was a close friend of Liebengood Sr. who watched his son grow up. At the Capitol, he said Sunday, both men strove to engage lawmakers and staffers regardless of political party.

On the day of the Capitol attack, Beck said, he emailed the younger Liebengood to see how he was doing. He didn't hear the news of his death until Sunday.

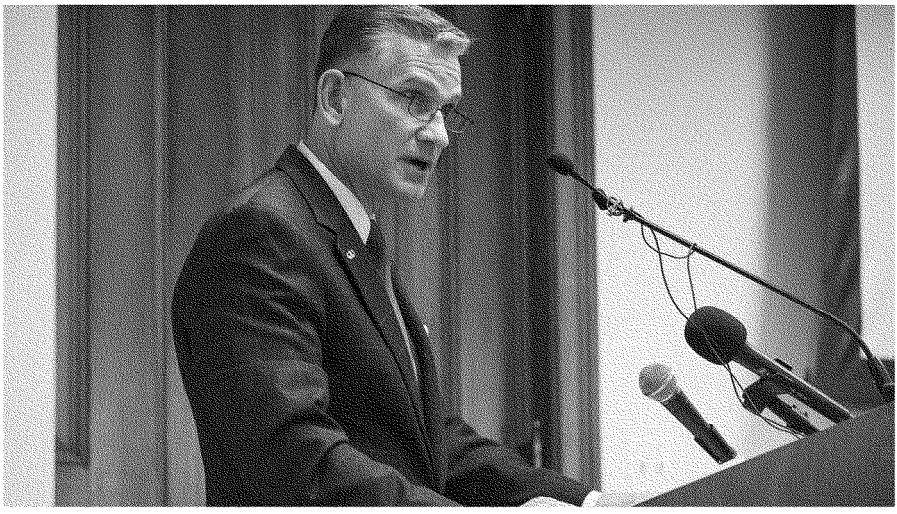
"I knew him his whole life. He was a good human being," Beck said. "After everything, this is just . . . it's tragic."

Carol D. Leonnig and Julie Tate contributed to this report.

If you or someone you know needs help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255). You can also text a crisis counselor by messaging the Crisis Text Line at 741741.

Trump's pick for U.S. attorney in Georgia dismisses election fraud claims: 'There's just nothing to them'

ajc.com/news/trumps-pick-for-us-attorney-in-georgia-dismisses-election-fraud-claims-theres-just-nothing-to-them/7JMIL37WANHWXCZD4FTJXH4CIQ/



United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia Bobby Christine speaks during a Public Safety Committee joint meeting at the Georgia State Capitol building in Atlanta on Monday, Jan. 27, 2020. Christine was named acting U.S. attorney for Georgia's Northern District after his predecessor abruptly resigned Jan. 4. (ALYSSA POINTER/ALYSSA.POINTER@AJC.COM)

Credit: ALYSSA POINTER

Credit: ALYSSA POINTER

AJC EXCLUSIVE | Jan 12, 2021

By Chris Joyner, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Bobby Christine also deflects questions about his sudden appointment in leaked call with staffers.

The acting U.S. attorney for Northern Georgia, who was named after his predecessor reportedly angered President Trump for not finding election fraud, told staffers in a conference call Monday that he dismissed two election fraud cases on his first day.

"I would love to stand out on the street corner and scream this, and I can't," said Bobby Christine, according to an audio recording of the call obtained by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

"But I can tell you I closed the two most — I don't know, I guess you'd call them high profile or the two most pressing election issues this office has," he said. "I said I believe, as many of the people around the table believed, there's just nothing to them."

Christine also said he found fewer election-related investigations in the office than he expected.

"Quite frankly, just watching television you would assume that you got election cases stacked from the floor to the ceiling," said Christine. "I am so happy to find out that's not the case, but I didn't know coming in."

Christine declined to comment on the call when contacted by the AJC Tuesday.

Former U.S. Attorney Byung J. "BJay" Pak, a Republican who had served since 2017, had planned to remain through the end of the Trump administration but resigned abruptly Jan. 4. Over the weekend, The Wall Street Journal reported the White House forced Pak to resign because Trump believed he was not being aggressive enough in investigating allegations of election fraud.

In a call with Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger two days before Pak's resignation, Trump disparaged Pak as a "never Trumper U.S. attorney."

Christine, the U.S. attorney for Georgia'sSouthern District, was appointed to replace him. The appointment bypassed the number two prosecutor in the office, Kurt Erskine, and raised fears of political interference as Trump was waging a campaign to overturn the results of the election.

Christine apparently convened the conference call to reassure federal lawyers in the Northern District office — most of whom are working remotely — that he was not pushing what Justice Department officials have called baseless claims of election fraud in President-Elect Joe Biden's victory in Georgia. Yet the questions from staff attorneys revealed deep suspicions and fears of political interference.

"Can you walk us through what happened when you were offered this position? Was it a call from the (Deputy Attorney General's) office, was it the acting Attorney General?" one lawyer on the call asked. "I think we are entitled to know what specifically was conveyed to you from either the White House or main Justice leadership."

Attorneys asked and re-asked why First Assistant U.S. Attorney Erskine had not been appointed as Pak's replacement during the transition.

"Many of us have been through multiple administrations, and almost always the FAUSA takes over," one lawyer on the call said.

"I don't think that's a question I'm going to get into," Christine said. "I appreciate you asking it; I empathize for why you would ask it, but I'm not going to get into that."



FILE - In this Tuesday, Aug. 13, 2019, file photo, U.S. Attorney Byung J. "BJay" Pak is seen following a news conference in Atlanta. Pak, the top federal prosecutor in Atlanta, left his position Monday, Jan. 4, 2021, a day after an audio recording was made public in which President Donald Trump called him a "never-Trumper." Pak, who was appointed by Trump, announced his resignation as U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Georgia in a news release. The statement did not say why Pak was leaving or what he plans to do next. (AP Photo/Ron Harris, File)

Credit: Ron Harris

Credit: Ron Harris

Won't be 'an election lawyer,' Christine says

Former federal prosecutor Buddy Parker spent 19 years in the Department of Justice, much of that time working in the Northern District of Georgia, and he said the abrupt resignation of Pak and appointment of Christine was a blow to the credibility of the office.

"I have never observed or heard of such an event as what happened last Monday week," he said.

Referring to the reporting of the Wall Street Journal and others, Parker said it was outrageous for a White House to force the resignation of United States attorney and appoint someone from another district to force action on a political matter.

"It's beyond very disruptive," he said. "To me, it's just a culture of fear of being created in the office."

When a U.S. attorney resigns, Parker said the first assistant attorney always takes over in an acting capacity. It is extremely unusual for a U.S. attorney from another district to be appointed, he said.

When Pak resigned and Christine was appointed, Parker said he called contacts in Savannah who described Christine as "absolutely devoted to Trump."

"He takes orders and executes orders. He also has great ambition, according to people I talked to down in Savannah," he said.

In September, Christine contributed $2,800 to Trump's reelection campaign, the maximum allowable individual contribution.

Pak alsocontributed to a number of Republican candidates and committees over the years, but he did not contribute to Trump and has made no political contributions since his appointment in 2017.

In 30 minutes of introductory remarks, Christine flattered the staff and attempted to reassure them he was there to "do no harm." Christine was appointed by Trump in 2017 to head Georgia's Southern District, a position he retains while also serving as acting U.S. attorney in the northern half of the state.

Christine said he didn't "race" to Atlanta to assume the position, arriving last Wednesday, partly in deference to his friendship and respect for Pak.

"I also knew we had an election going on Tuesday and I didn't want my arrival to distract any leadership in our office or in the federal agencies," he said.

"I'm not coming up here to be an election lawyer," he said. "I'm not coming here for that purpose."

'No there, there'

Christine said the Northern District office was "running like a sewing machine," but that description only prompted more questions from staff as to why he decided to bring two lawyers skilled in election law from the more thinly staffed Southern District.

Christine said he brought the two election attorneys to help with what he assumed was a "dump truck full" of election files, but instead found "very, very few."

Even so, Christine met with the FBI, GBI and the Department of Homeland Security on his first day in Atlanta to get briefed on election cases, he said. So far, Christine said the election cases were overblown, and cited the two cases he closed last Wednesday.

"In my opinion, there is no there, there," he said.

When asked by a staff attorney, Christine described such issues as "well-intentioned" complaints of receiving two ballots. "That may actually be a well-intentioned person who received an application for a ballot and then the ballot itself," he said.

"We don't have these huge colossal issues that if you turn on the TV you'd think it'd be," he said. "Some of them might be threatening emails that come from an IP address that actually might lead us right back to the complainant, right? So election issues are more than just what we hear about on TV. You all know that better than I do."

Christine also revealed that he has contracted to bring in a third outside lawyer: Miles M. "Matt" Hart, a former prosecutor from the Northern District of Alabama with history of prosecuting government corruption and white collar crimes.

Christine said he hired Hart because of his history dealing with public corruption cases and alluded to something big in the Northern District.

"I am not experienced in public corruption, and it is my understanding that there is a colossal public corruption series of cases in the office and a well-staffed team that are working those issues," he said. "BJay made me aware, Kurt's given me more information, and I expect we'll learn more."

Christine was pushed as to whether he would resign on Jan. 20, as Pak had planned. He said he wouldn't "be dragged out of here by my heels," but he repeatedly hedged on his future plans.

"I simply don't know how long that will be. Is it one day? Is it one week? Is it one year? I don't know," he said. "I assume it's shorter rather than longer, but I don't know."

In Other News

Mattis blames Trump for violence at Capitol, says his actions 'poison our respect for fellow citizens'

cnbc.com/2021/01/06/mattis-blames-trump-for-violence-at-capitol-says-his-actions-poison-our-respect-for-fellow-citizens.html

January 7, 2021



Key Points

- Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis placed the blame squarely on President Donald Trump for the riot that ensued at the U.S. Capitol.
- Mattis, who served as Trump's first defense secretary, said the president has used the nation's highest role in government to "destroy trust in our election and to poison our respect for fellow citizens."

Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis (R) listens to US President Donald J. Trump (L) deliver remarks during a meeting with members of his Cabinet, in the Cabinet Room of the White House March 8, 2018 in Washington, DC.

Michael Reynolds | Getty Images News | Getty Images

WASHINGTON – Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis on Wednesday evening placed the blame squarely on President Donald Trump for the riot that ensued on the U.S. Capitol.

"Today's violent assault on our Capitol, an effort to subjugate American democracy by mob rule, was fomented by Mr. Trump," Mattis wrote in a statement.

Mattis, who served as Trump's first Defense secretary, said the president has used the nation's highest role in government to "destroy trust in our election and to poison our respect for fellow citizens."

"Our Constitution and our Republic will overcome this stain and We the People will come together again in our never-ending effort to form a more perfect Union, while Mr. Trump will deservedly be left a man without a country," Mattis wrote.

Read more: National Guard heads to the Capitol to tamp down pro-Trump insurrection

The stinging statement from the revered Marine with a military career spanning four decades is the second time Mattis has broken his silence since leaving the Trump administration.

Last June, Mattis ripped into Trump after protestors were forcibly cleared from Lafayette Square in order for the president to participate in a photo-op with some members of his cabinet. The ensuing civil unrest, some of which turned violent, prompted Trump to call for governors to use harsher tactics and greater force when confronting protesters.

The protests, which rocked D.C. for more than a week, were sparked by the police killing of George Floyd. Floyd died after a Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck.

"Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people—does not even pretend to try. Instead, he tries to divide us," Mattis wrote in a scathing statement published by The Atlantic.

"We are witnessing the consequences of three years of this deliberate effort. We are witnessing the consequences of three years without mature leadership," he wrote, adding that he "watched this week's unfolding events, angry and appalled," the four-star Marine wrote.

President Donald Trump welcomes James Mattis as they pose for a photo before their meeting at Trump International Golf Club, in Bedminster Township, New Jersey.

Drew Angerer | Getty Images

On Sunday, the nation's 10 living secretaries of Defense penned an ominous warning that the U.S. military should have no role in determining the outcome of a U.S. election.

"Each of us swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic. We did not swear it to an individual or a party," penned Defense secretaries Mark Esper, James Mattis, Ash Carter, Chuck Hagel, Leon Panetta, Dick Cheney, William Cohen, Robert Gates, William Perry and Donald Rumsfeld in an op-ed published Sunday in The Washington Post.

The former Defense secretaries, who have collectively overseen America's military forces for nearly 50 years, argued that "the time for questioning the results" of the U.S. presidential election has passed.

"Our elections have occurred. Recounts and audits have been conducted. Appropriate challenges have been addressed by the courts. Governors have certified the results. And the electoral college has voted. The time for questioning the results has passed; the time for the formal counting of the electoral college votes, as prescribed in the Constitution and statute, has arrived," wrote the former Defense secretaries, including two that served under Trump.

The secretaries called on Trump's acting Defense Secretary Miller as well as political appointees and civil servants to "refrain from any political actions that undermine the results of the election or hinder the success of the new team."

VIDEO4:1704:17

Former U.S. defense secretary Chuck Hagel on the rioting and bloodshed in Washington, D.C.

The News with Shepard Smith

Mob at U.S. Capitol encouraged by online conspiracy theories

AP apnews.com/article/donald-trump-conspiracy-theories-michael-pence-media-social-media-daba3f5dd16a431abc627a5cfc922b87

January 7, 2021



ADVERTISEMENT

By AMANDA SEITZJanuary 7, 2021 GMT

1 of 3

FILE - In this Jan. 6, 2021, file photo, Trump supporters participate in a rally in Washington. Far-right social media users for weeks openly hinted in widely shared posts that chaos would erupt at the U.S. Capitol while Congress convened to certify the election results. (AP Photo/John Minchillo, File)

1 of 3

FILE - In this Jan. 6, 2021, file photo, Trump supporters participate in a rally in Washington. Far-right social media users for weeks openly hinted in widely shared posts that chaos would erupt at the U.S. Capitol while Congress convened to certify the election results. (AP

Photo/John Minchillo, File)

CHICAGO (AP) — Every video the Louisiana man posts on Twitter and Facebook starts with a big smile and a wish for his thousands of followers to have a blessed day.

But as he drove to the nation's capital Tuesday morning, he grew loud and angry talking about the presidential election.

"You aren't going to wake up and see?" Christian Suprean, 42, said in one of a dozen videos that together have drawn more than 30,000 views on Twitter in recent days. "I think we won everything. I think we won everything!"

Suprean is one of thousands of President Donald Trump's fiercest supporters who, fueled by dozens of internet conspiracy theories about the November election, responded to online cries to join a "fight" on the president's behalf Wednesday. In posts liked and shared thousands of times, far-right social media users openly hinted for weeks that chaos would erupt at the U.S. Capitol while Congress convened to certify the election results.

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Despite those warnings that disgruntled crowds of Trump supporters were headed for Washington, a mob seized control of the Capitol and vandalized the building, sending members of Congress into hiding for several hours. Lawmakers from both parties have pledged to investigate law enforcement's actions and questioned whether a lack of preparedness allowed the melee.

"It's what brought them out to the streets yesterday — that's how they found information about where to gather," Nina Jankowicz, a disinformation expert at the nonpartisan Wilson Center in Washington, said of the social media posts. "Yesterday, the effect of disinformation, conspiracy theories and extremism was on display for the entire world to see."

The president encouraged his Twitter and Facebook followers to attend Wednesday's rally, at times using warlike imagery to urge supporters to show up. Minutes before they stormed the Capitol, Trump pressed his hopeless case to overturn the election in front of the crowd in a speech laced with conspiracy theories.

"The (cavalry) is coming, Mr. President," said one of the president's retweets on Jan. 1 sharing details about the rally.

Reached by phone Wednesday, Suprean said Trump's calls on social media motivated him to drive 15 hours from Slidell, Louisiana, to Washington. He documented the trip and rally with videos and photos — all taken from outside the Capitol building — that he shared on his Twitter, Facebook and YouTube pages, where he regularly references QAnon and has a

strong following from QAnon accounts. QAnon is a baseless belief, born on the internet, that Trump has been secretly fighting deep state enemies and a cabal of Satan-worshipping cannibals operating a child sex-trafficking ring.

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Dozens of QAnon social media accounts spent the days leading up to the D.C. rally hyping up Jan. 6, expressing hope that the election results would be overturned.

QAnon's influence was evident as the mob descended on the halls of Congress. Police officers were photographed fending off a man in a "Q" sweatshirt from the Senate chamber. A leading promoter of QAnon was also photographed in Senate chambers wearing bull horns and face paint.

Facebook said in a statement late Wednesday that it was removing photos and videos posted by the mob at the Capitol. Twitter also said it was working to "take action" on threats and calls for violence.

But as the riot continued, QAnon and far-right conservatives used social media to urge followers to "hold the line" and "trust the plan," phrases that were mentioned more than 80,000 times across online media Wednesday and Thursday, according to an analysis by media intelligence firm Zignal Labs. More than 1 million mentions of "civil war" and "storm the capitol" appeared in Twitter posts, the firm also found. Others called for Vice President Mike Pence — who enraged Trump when he acknowledged that he did not have the power to unilaterally throw out electoral college votes — to be tried for treason. One Facebook post, quickly deleted, said Pence, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell should be hanged.

And many pro-Trump accounts are still using the platforms to celebrate Wednesday's riots as a success with QAnon hashtags. Others continue to push conspiracy theories that Trump is the rightful winner of the election.

"WE DID IT! THANK Q PATRIOTS!" one QAnon account wrote on Twitter, moments after Pence was whisked away from Senate chambers for his safety.

Facebook announced Wednesday that it was suspending Trump's ability to post on its site indefinitely. Twitter also temporarily locked Trump's account.

While Facebook and Twitter have locked Trump out of his account, the platforms have not taken strong enough action against the social media network of conspiracy theorists that encouraged Wednesday's riots, Jankowicz said.

"That's going to embolden these extremists in the future," she said. "They see their job as a job well done, and they can do it again with impunity."

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The Capitol mob: A raging collection of grievances and disillusionment

washingtonpost.com/investigations/2021/01/10/capitol-rioters-identified-arrested/

Amy Brittain, Julie Zauzmer, Jenn Abelson, David Willman, Nicole Dungca



The 36-year-old West Texas florist and self-described "conservative die hard patriot" always took to Facebook when she had something to say. So just hours after Jenny Cudd and scores of fellow Trump supporters swarmed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday during a violent insurrection, she launched a live stream with a Trump flag draped over her shoulders and boasted, "We did break down ... Nancy Pelosi's office door."

Nearly 1,700 miles away in Midland, Tex., Heather Bredimus watched in disbelief. She knew Cudd. Quite well, in fact. The two women had bitterly feuded over mask ordinances during the coronavirus pandemic. In recent weeks, Bredimus had grown frightened for her personal safety after she said Cudd, an anti-masker, became increasingly obsessed with targeting those who supported mask ordinances and openly discussed buying ammunition and a coming "revolution."

Still, Bredimus says it has been truly stunning to see her "arch nemesis" on tape boldly claiming involvement in an attempted takeover of the fortress of American democracy.

"I didn't think she would take it that far," Bredimus said of watching the footage of Cudd in Washington. "You don't think the people from your hometown are going to be the crazy ones on TV and in the news." Cudd did not respond to requests for comment for this story.

Four days after the Capitol riot, similar realizations have unfolded in communities across the country, as social media sleuths, local news accounts and, in some cases, newly filed court records have begun to fill in the identities of thousands of individuals who descended upon Washington to trumpet their support for President Trump's false and incendiary claims that the U.S. presidential election was rigged.

Those who made their way to the grounds of the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday hail from at least 36 states, along with the District of Columbia and Canada, according to a Washington Post list of over 100 people identified as being on the scene of the Capitol. Their professions touch nearly every facet of American society: lawyers, local lawmakers, real estate agents, law enforcement officers, military veterans, construction workers, hair stylists and nurses. Among the crowd were devout Christians who highlighted Bible verses, adherents of the QAnon conspiracy theory and members of documented hate groups, including white nationalist organizations and militant right-wing organizations, such as the Proud Boys.

The list is just a limited cross section of the thousands of people who descended upon the area, yet some striking commonalities are hard to ignore. Almost all on the list whose race could be readily identified are White. Most are men, yet about one in six were women — also almost all White.

Many left extensive social media documentation of their passions, ideologies and, in some cases, disillusionment and vendettas.

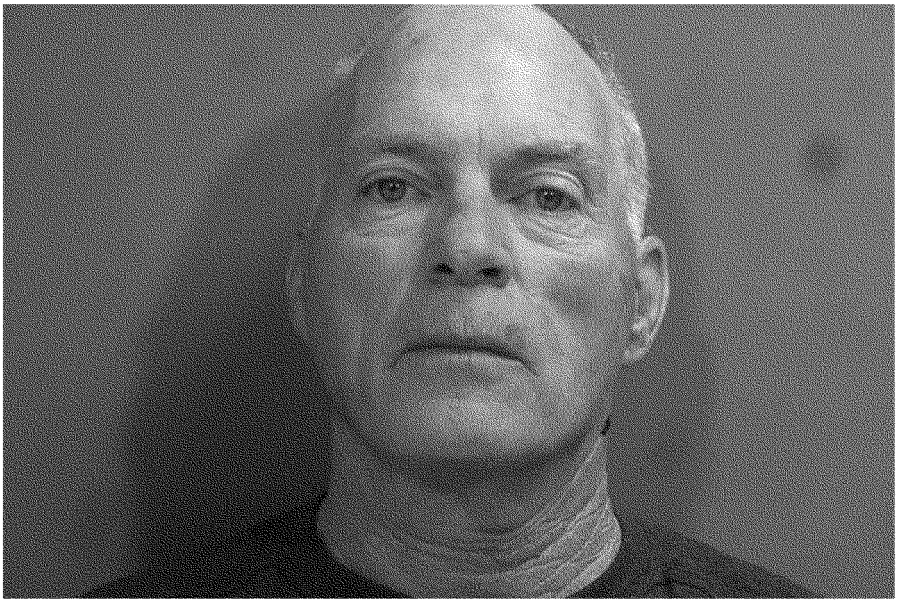
Their paths to the nation's capital were largely fueled by long-standing grievances and distrust, and yet planned in spontaneous and ad-hoc fashion. Several reported pulling together their travel funds and schedules in just a handful of days. Some took a solitary journey, including flying from coast to coast alone, only to find a shared community upon their final destination in Washington. Others traveled in buses that departed Wednesday at dawn, filled to the brim with other Trump supporters.



Ashli Babbitt, 35, was shot and killed in the Capitol on Wednesday. (Courtesy of Timothy McEntee)

In the wake of the violent mob's collective actions, five people have lost their lives. Ashli Babbitt — an Air Force veteran — was shot and killed by Capitol Police. One Capitol Police officer died of injuries and three other individuals died due to medical emergencies during the riot.

Some of the most distinctive rioters captured in viral images quickly left the District, only to be taken into custody closer to home: Authorities have charged Richard Barnett, the 60-year-old Arkansan pictured with his feet on a staffer's desk in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office; Jacob Anthony Chansley, a QAnon evangelizer from Arizona also known as Jake Angeli, who roamed the Capitol shirtless with a horned headdress; and Adam Johnson, a 36-year-old Florida man who held Pelosi's lectern in photographs. Before he was arrested, Chansley told The Washington Post that he had not committed any violent acts. Barnett told the New York Times that he had just been knocking on the door when he was pushed in by the crowd.



Richard Barnett of Arkansas, who was pictured with his feet on a staffer's desk in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office, has been charged. (Washington County, Ark., Sheriff's Office/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock)



Jacob Anthony Chansley, a QAnon evangelizer from Arizona also known as Jake Angeli, has been charged. (Stephanie Keith/Reuters)

LEFT: Richard Barnett of Arkansas, who was pictured with his feet on a staffer's desk in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office, has been charged. (Washington County, Ark., Sheriff's Office/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock) RIGHT: Jacob Anthony Chansley, a QAnon evangelizer from Arizona also known as Jake Angeli, has been charged. (Stephanie Keith/Reuters)

A handful of the most notorious rioters, including a man who carried a Confederate flag over his shoulder though the Capitol, have not yet had their identities publicly confirmed by law enforcement.

Dozens of people have been arrested — some for minor offenses like breaking curfew or unlawful entry, while others face more serious federal charges, including firearm possession, violent entry and disorderly conduct at the Capitol building. The count is expected to grow rapidly in the coming days. On Sunday morning, Michael Sherwin, the acting U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia told NPR that his staff is working around-the-clock to sort through "potentially thousands of people that may have information about crimes ... meaning there could be hundreds of people charged."

One of those whose actions have drawn law enforcement scrutiny is Cudd, the Midland florist who spoke on camera about breaking down Pelosi's door. Bredimus and her husband confirmed that FBI agents recently interviewed them about Cudd's behavior.

The acrimony between Bredimus and Cudd began in November, when Bredimus, a 37-year-old graphic designer, squared off against Cudd during a contentious city hall meeting debating the merits of a mask ordinance. They soon spearheaded rival mask groups: Bredimus, who is married to a hospital official, heads the pro-mask "Masks in Midland" club, and Cudd leads those opposed to masks. By December, Bredimus said anti-maskers began circulating photos of her van and license plate number, leading to anonymous death threats.

Later that month, Bredimus says, Cudd stood outside of Bredimus's residence — with Bredimus's four children inside and home alone — and began live-streaming to her followers. Bredimus said she alerted the Midland Police Department to voice concerns over what she viewed as Cudd's erratic and potentially threatening behavior but was told there was nothing they could do.

Cudd denied wrongdoing in an interview on Friday with a Midland television station, saying she did not mean for it to be taken literally when she said "we" broke into Pelosi's office. She deleted her Facebook account late Saturday amid growing scrutiny of her digital footprint, which contained a Jan. 3 post that warned: "No matter what Trump will be President for 4 more years. Enjoy the show."

Such a purge became the norm over the weekend, as people who attended the Capitol event made largely fruitless attempts to scrub lives that were lived nearly entirely online.

At least 15 people who attended the rally have been fired or suspended from their jobs, or preemptively resigned amid growing outrage, according to a Post tally. One of the fired is 41-year-old laborer Doug Jensen of Des Moines, who is facing federal charges after he was captured in photos and videos leading rioters up a staircase as a police officer attempted to hold the crowd back.

Jensen's boss, Dick Felice, who owns Forrest & Associate Masonry, said he terminated Jensen's employment.

"He committed a crime as far as I'm concerned," Felice said. Jensen could not be reached for comment.

Some participants pleaded for forgiveness.

"It was the single worst personal decision of my life," Bradley Rukstales, CEO of a Chicago-area data analytics company, wrote in a public statement. Rukstales was fired from his job and faces two federal charges stemming from his actions inside the Capitol. He did not respond to a Post reporter's requests for comment.

Others said they had been unfairly maligned.

Amilee Stuckey, a 55-year-old lawyer from central Florida, said she stayed put outside the Capitol for roughly two hours, wanting to bear witness to what transpired. She said the resulting violence left her in tears, feeling "just appalled." Still, she scoffed in the face of social media critics who have written that Stuckey's law firm should fire her.

She does not reply to them, but takes a grim satisfaction in the fact that "I own the damn firm."

A Huntington Beach, Calif., hair salon owner, 32-year-old Kristopher Drew Martin, said a viral video in which he claimed "we stormed" the Capitol has been taken out of context and that he did not personally storm the building. He later said that those who entered the building were wrong.

Martin blamed "the left" and the media for the backlash to his video, which he says has included death threats and bad reviews online about his business.

"They enjoy hurting people, especially a Trump supporter," he said. "It feels so good to watch me suffer right now, but I never wanted them to suffer."

Most who were interviewed by Post reporters remained resolute.

Glynnda White, a 58-year-old retired local government worker and Army veteran from Winter Haven, Fla., said she had no regrets about making the trip.

"We were invited by the president" to Washington, said White, who says she stood outside the Capitol but did not enter the building. "And we went."

Driven by pandemic grievances

Several who traveled to Washington to support the "Stop the Steal" rally told The Post they were driven by two primary grievances: their opposition to the election results and the restrictions in place to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

Lindsey Graham, a 39-year-old entrepreneur from Salem, Ore., said her eventual path to the Capitol began last spring, when the six small businesses she and her husband own, including tanning salons, a gym and hair salon, were suddenly shuttered because of coronavirus restrictions. Graham said she voted for Trump in 2016 but did not become politically active until her family was financially struggling last year.

She defied state orders and reopened her salon in May, racking up thousands of dollars in fines for violations. Since then, the mother of three has posted online under the moniker "Patriot Barbie," frequently railing against mask mandates and selling trucker hats, red lip glitter and American flag earrings on her personal website.



Lindsey Graham defies state orders by reopening her salon in Salem, Ore., on May 5, racking up thousands of dollars in fines for violations. (Alex Milan Tracy/Sipa USA/AP)

"It has become a passion since my rights were taken away in March," she said. "Before this, I had nothing to do with politics." In early November, she traveled to Huntington Beach, Calif., for her first Trump rally. After the election, she said she grew increasingly convinced that Trump's claims about election fraud had merit. "I believe that he won the election," she said. In mid-December, she sued Oregon Gov. Kate Brown (D) for $100,000, claiming her civil rights were violated by the state's enforcement measures. And, on New Year's Eve, Graham made her next plans clear with a simple post on Facebook: "See you in DC!!!!" She traveled alone and said she stayed at the home of a welcoming Virginia resident whom she had never met.

On Wednesday, she said she watched Trump speak with great excitement and then followed "the planned agenda" by marching to the Capitol. Once there, she said she stayed outside for three hours, clapping and chanting "U-S-A!" Graham said she was "peacefully protesting" with thousands of people. She said she did not enter the building and does not condone violence.

"I'm glad I was there because I am one of the people that can vouch for the crowd," she said.

Like Graham, 47-year-old construction worker Pete Harding said he was drawn to the Capitol by his disdain for restrictions to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Until last year, the Upstate New York resident said he had largely confined his strong political opinions to the

Internet, describing himself as just a "keyboard warrior."

That's all changed now, in radical fashion. The first days of 2021 found him — by his own account — charging through the chemical irritants that Capitol Police meant to deter him from entering the U.S. Capitol, rambling through the building, and then attempting to set fire to journalists' equipment outside.

Last year, in his hometown of Cheektowaga, N.Y., he began regularly protesting prevention measures for individuals and businesses and was eventually arrested for refusing to leave a liquor store where staff asked him to wear a mask.

"We know that if Biden-Harris was going to get into office, they've said they're going to make the lockdowns mandatory and mask-wearing mandatory across the country," he said. Hoping to prevent a president who would take stronger action against the virus, he joined the MAGA demonstrations in November in Washington, which he described as "gorgeous" and "inspired." He drove to D.C. again for Wednesday's action.

After listening to Trump's speech and marching to the Capitol, he found that "our people," as he described the mob, had already pushed police back up to the top of the Capitol steps. He waded through the crowd to join them, and persisted up the stairs, though he says police repeatedly deployed irritants to try to deter the mob.

Harding describes himself as a "peacekeeper" who charged up the Capitol stairs to protect both police officers and rioters. "I started to see everybody going up the stairs at that point, and I decided I needed to be up there. ... I knew that things could escalate and I needed to be there to de-escalate things," he said. "I was there to protect and keep the peace. That's what I do every single place that I go."

Harding said that the only weapon he carried was a dinner fork, which he put in his pocket because he believed he might need it to confront "antifa" or "Muslim brotherhood" fighters. It stayed in his pocket.

"Fortunately, I didn't have to wield the kitchen fork menacingly," he said.

Once he left the Capitol, he saw journalists with cameras protected by barricades. He says he walked over twice to taunt them, saying, "You're responsible for this" and "There's a woman shot — this is on your hands." Harding claims that only after he walked away did other Trump supporters harass the journalists to the point that they fled, leaving behind their equipment. He was delighted.

"I was kind of happy about it, to be honest with you, not going to lie, because they deserve it. But that's not a crime," he said. He said he came back and piled up the abandoned equipment, then used a lighter to try to set it on fire though he believed most of it was metal and wouldn't burn.

"The visual and the imagery was for the media to see, that they have started our country on fire," Harding said, "with their constant lies about covid and about Trump."

Harding maintains that he did nothing illegal Wednesday. He said he contacted his local FBI office and offered to talk and has consulted with a lawyer.

'I broke the law'

Many attendees described a type of fervor they felt that drew them to the Capitol. For 48-year-old Leonard Guthrie Jr., it manifested in his faith in the Lord. The Cape May, N.J., resident hasn't often been well enough to work since having two surgeries on his back. In the absence of employment, he has heavily leaned into his Christian beliefs and conservative political views.

When he heard about the "Stop the Steal" rally, Guthrie thought he could combine his two passions. If he and other Christians had been able to pray outside while senators voted inside, he feels certain it would have changed their votes. "I know it would have," he said.

So despite the misfiring nerves in his back that made sitting in a car for hours a painful endeavor, he made the journey. And for him, it ended in the D.C. jail. He said he broke through a police barrier to reach the U.S. Capitol steps and readily admits his transgressions, bluntly saying: "I broke the law."

Still, he feels aggrieved. "We've been silenced for so long," he said. "For years, because I voted for Trump, I'm called a racist, a Nazi, a bigot and all that stuff, and it's not right."

Others squarely cited their fealty to the president as the force that pulled them to the nation's capital. Some, like David Ray Fitzgerald of Roselle, Ill., identified as relatively new Trump supporters,.

The 48-year-old tattoo artist and father of seven said he doesn't usually vote but became a staunch Trump fan over the past year as he spent days in quarantine reading up on the president's attitudes toward trade agreements and abortion. He posted Facebook messages and memes chastising liberals for being too sensitive, railing against "fake news," and glorifying Trump.

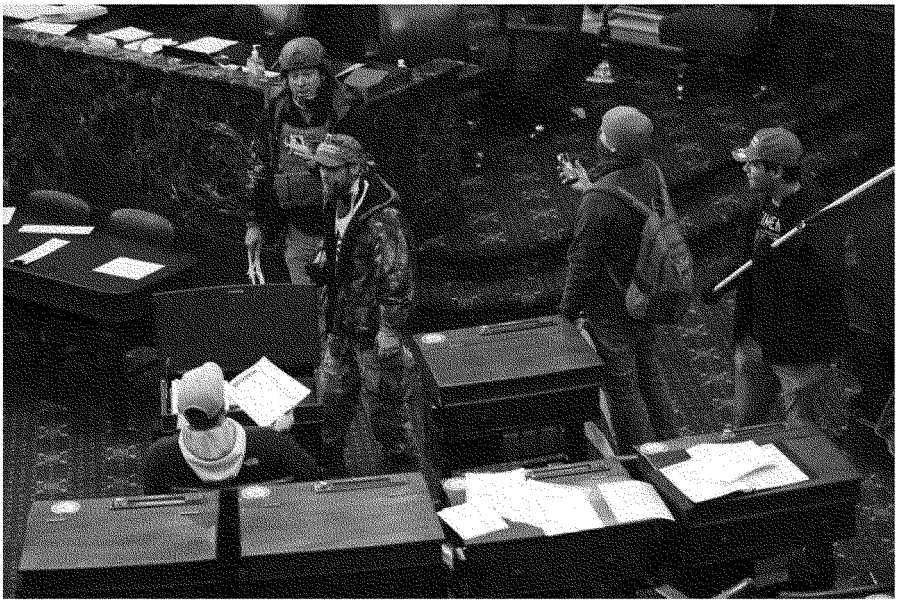
"I'm not a 'deranged Trump supporter,' " he said. "I'm an American supporter, and I think that there's only one person on the ticket that has the same values as I do."

Fitzgerald and friends pooled their resources to organize the drive and book a Holiday Inn room for the Jan. 6 rally, driven by their hope that Trump could still win the election.

Fitzgerald said he only watched the chaos from the grass and didn't venture into the Capitol building. Later that night, he was arrested on charges of a curfew violation and unlawful entry as he stood in the parking lot. Fitzgerald said he hated his experience in jail, but still

felt like he made the right decisions Wednesday.

"You can't say, 'I'm here until things get difficult,' " he said. "I'm here to support everything to the end, regardless of what happens to me."



Members of the mob that stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6 enter the Senate chamber. (Win McNamee/Getty Images)



A rioter is seen hanging from the balcony in the Senate chamber on Jan. 6. (Win McNamee/Getty Images)

LEFT: Members of the mob that stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6 enter the Senate chamber. (Win McNamee/Getty Images) RIGHT: A rioter is seen hanging from the balcony in the Senate chamber on Jan. 6. (Win McNamee/Getty Images)

Rick Saccone, a former Pennsylvania state legislator and Republican who in 2018 narrowly lost a race for Congress after campaigning alongside Trump, boarded a bus in Pittsburgh before 7 a.m. Wednesday, bound for Washington.

Saccone said he believed that voting irregularities had surfaced during his own campaigns — and he suspected that Trump had fallen victim to much worse in the November election.

"People are just mad," Saccone recalled in an interview. "I think I speak for many people: They wanted their vote counted."

Saccone, 62, was not among those arrested in Washington. Nor did he join those who vaulted, squeezed and rushed into the Capitol. Instead, he said he remained outside on the West Lawn. Wearing a Trump-emblazoned, royal blue beanie, he posted a video message on his Facebook page with the caption, "We are storming the capitol. Our vanguard has broken thru the barricades. We will save this nation. Are u with me?"

Saccone took down his Facebook post later Wednesday and told The Post he believes the people who stormed the Capitol should be prosecuted.

On Thursday, St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pa., where Saccone, who holds a PhD in international relations, had taught since 1999, announced his resignation amid a growing outcry.

Asked whether he had any regrets about his eventful trip to Washington, Saccone cited a scarcity of portable toilets across the city, which he attributed to Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D).

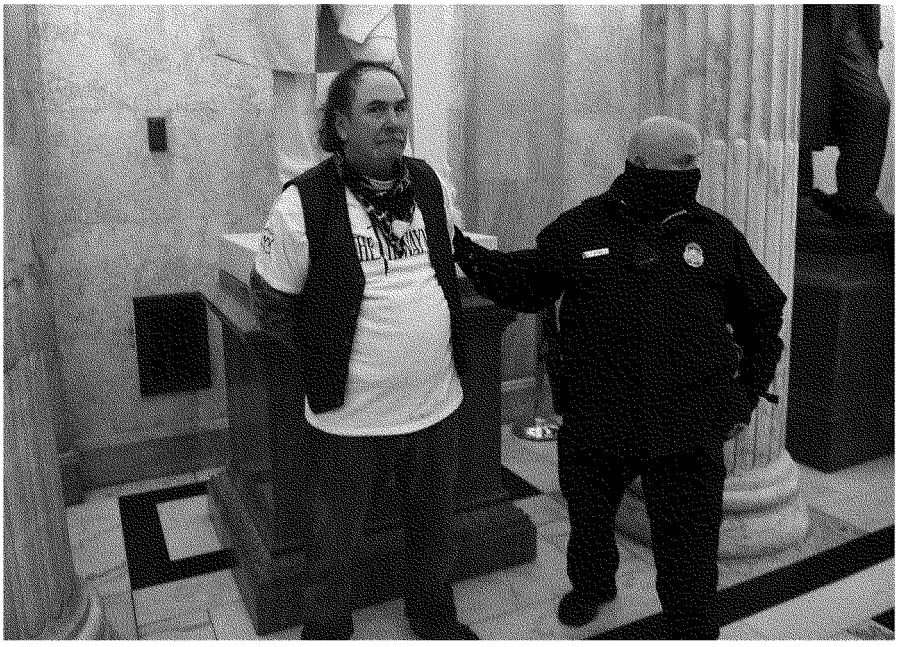
"I blame the mayor for that," Saccone said. "I think she was trying to torture us."

Bowser's office did not immediately respond to requests for comment, but the mayor has no authority over toilets on federal property.

'I feel like he is under a spell'

The images from the Capitol violence have left not just a stain on the nation, but in many families shock that a loved one chose to show up for such an event.

When Robyn Sweet saw the violence break out at the Capitol on Wednesday, she immediately suspected her father, Douglas Sweet, was part of the mayhem. She and her relatives spent hours trying to reach him and eventually learned he'd been arrested on a charge of unlawful entry.



Douglas Sweet of Virginia was arrested on a charge of unlawful entry of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. (Olivier Douliery/AFP/Getty Images)

She described her father as a self-employed handyman in his late 50s who lives in rural Virginia and became increasingly fixated with conspiracy theories after Barack Obama was elected president. That escalated when Trump rose to power, Sweet said, and her father attended the deadly "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville in 2017 and has discussed concerns about child pedophile rings and adrenochrome, a chemical compound they believe is extracted from captive children's blood — baseless conspiracy theories spread by QAnon followers.

"He wholeheartedly believes this stuff," Sweet said. "I feel like he is under a spell. Trump has got these people under a spell," said Sweet, a 35-year-old health-care worker who helped organize a Black Lives Matter protest after George Floyd's death in Minneapolis and launched a Facebook group, Bigotry Exposed, in 2018.

Douglas Sweet, who could not be reached for comment, posted a message on Facebook after his arrest saying he was released on his own recognizance and described the unlawful entry charge as "a citation equal to ticket." His daughter provided The Post with a copy of the message and it was also shared on Twitter.

"Our Goal was to speak to the house and Senate about 'stop the steal' and infiltration by the Chinese Communist Party of our government," Douglas Sweet wrote. "I feel strongly about defending our Constitutional rights and will not sit on the sidelines and watch as both parties trample our Rights and commit treason with foreign enemies and Governments."

Robyn Sweet said there are many people from their community in Mathews County who support her father's beliefs and she thinks the arrest will further radicalize him, rather than serve as a wake-up call.

"They are hailing him like he is a martyr," she said. "It's sickening."

Sweet said the relationship with her father is strained — he asked her in June whether she was a member of antifa and blocked her on Facebook — but she said they still love each other. She is currently isolating after being exposed to the coronavirus, which causes covid-19, a disease she said her father does not think is real.

Julie Tate, Meryl Kornfield, Hannah Natanson, Alex Horton, Maria Sacchetti, Amar Nadhir, Justin George, Paulina Villegas, Rachel Weiner, Alice Crites, Devlin Barrett, and Matt Zapotosky contributed to this report.

About this story

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‘Find the fraud’: Trump pressured a Georgia elections investigator in a separate call legal experts say could amount to obstruction

washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-call-georgia-investigator/2021/01/09/7a55c7fa-51cf-11eb-83e3-322644d82356_story.html

By Amy Gardner January 9, 2021



President Trump urged Georgia’s lead elections investigator to “find the fraud” in a lengthy December phone call, saying the official would be a “national hero,” according to an individual familiar with the call who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the conversation.

Trump placed the call to the investigations chief for the Georgia secretary of state’s office shortly before Christmas — while the individual was leading an inquiry into allegations of ballot fraud in Cobb County, in the suburbs of Atlanta, according to people familiar with the episode.

The president’s attempts to intervene in an ongoing investigation could amount to obstruction of justice or other criminal violations, legal experts said, though they cautioned a case could be difficult to prove.

Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger had launched the inquiry following allegations that Cobb election officials had improperly accepted mail ballots with signatures that did not match those on file — claims that state officials ultimately concluded had no merit.

In an interview with The Washington Post on Friday, Raffensperger confirmed that Trump had placed the Dec. 23 call. He said he was not familiar with the specifics of what the president said in the conversation with his chief investigator, but said it was inappropriate for Trump to have tried to intervene in the case.

"That was an ongoing investigation," Raffensperger said. "I don't believe that an elected official should be involved in that process."

The Post is withholding the name of the investigator, who did not respond to repeated requests for comment, because of the risk of threats and harassment directed at election officials.

The White House did not respond to requests for comment.

Since Election Day, Trump has made at least three calls to government officials in Georgia in an attempt to subvert President-elect Joe Biden's victory, beginning with a conversation with Gov. Brian Kemp (R) in early December to berate him for certifying the state's election results.

The president is furious with both Raffensperger and Kemp, who have refused to echo his claims that the election was rigged. He has complained that they betrayed him after he endorsed both of their 2018 elections. At a rally Wednesday in Washington, shortly before his supporters ransacked the Capitol, he attacked them personally onstage, calling the two men "corrupt."

Trump's call to the chief investigator occurred more than a week before he spent an hour on the phone with Raffensperger, pushing him to overturn the vote. In that Jan. 2 conversation, the president alternately berated the secretary of state, tried to flatter him, begged him to act and threatened him with vague criminal consequences if the fellow Republican refused to pursue his false claims, at one point warning that he was taking "a big risk."

Legal experts said Trump's call to the secretary of state may have broken state or federal laws that bar the solicitation of election fraud or prohibit participating in a conspiracy against people exercising their civil rights.

Trump's earlier call, to the chief investigator, could also carry serious criminal implications, according to several former prosecutors, who said that the president may have violated laws against bribery or interfering with an ongoing probe.

"Oh my god, of course that's obstruction — any way you cut it," said Nick Akerman, a former federal prosecutor in New York and a onetime member of the Watergate prosecution team, responding to a description of Trump's conversation with the investigator.

Akerman said he would be "shocked" if Trump didn't commit a crime of obstruction under the Georgia statutes. He said the fact that the president took the time to identify the investigator, obtain a phone number and then call "shows that he's trying to influence the outcome of what's going on."

However, such cases can be difficult to prove, and legal experts said the decision to prosecute Trump — even after he leaves office — would be a politically fraught one.

Robert James, a former prosecutor in DeKalb County, Ga., said that proving obstruction would hinge on what Trump said and the tone he used, as well as whether the president's intentions were clear.

Without the audio of the call, it would be more difficult to prove wrongdoing, he said. The later call with Raffensperger is more damning, he said, because of the power of the audio that was made public.

"He says, 'Go find me some votes.' That can clearly be interpreted as asking someone to break the law," James said.

In the wake of the Capitol siege by Trump supporters, Democratic House leaders said Friday they were preparing articles of impeachment that they planned to vote on as early this coming week. While they were focused primarily on Trump's role in inciting a violent mob to storm the Capitol, an early draft circulated Friday also mentioned Trump's call to Raffensperger as an example of "prior efforts to subvert and obstruct" the certification of the 2020 election.

Raffensperger briefly mentioned Trump's December call to the chief investigator in an interview with ABC's "Good Morning America" earlier this week. But the details of the conversation had not been previously reported.

On the call, Trump sounded much like he did while talking to Raffensperger, according to the person familiar with the discussion — meandering from flattery to frustration and back again.

It was one in a series of personal interventions by Trump and his allies in Georgia since the November election. The president has obsessed about his defeat in the state and expressed disbelief to aides that he could have lost while other Republicans won.

It is unclear how the president tracked down the chief elections investigator. Before his Jan. 2 call to Raffensperger, Trump had tried to reach the secretary of state at least 18 times, but the calls were patched to interns in the press office who thought it was a prank and did not realize the president was on the line, as The Post previously reported. White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows ultimately arranged the conference call among Trump, Raffensperger and their aides.

That conversation followed previous inquiries to state officials by Trump allies.

In mid-November, Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) contacted Raffensperger to inquire about whether entire counties' mail ballots could be tossed if an audit found high rates of mismatched signatures in those jurisdictions.

Raffensperger told The Post at the time that Graham appeared to be suggesting that he find a way to toss legally cast ballots. Graham denied that, calling that characterization "ridiculous."

Then in late December, Meadows traveled to Cobb County to see for himself how the ballot-signature audit was proceeding.

Meadows said he was not trying to interfere with the investigation but just wanted to "talk outside of the tweets," Jordan Fuchs, the deputy secretary of state, said at the time.

Meadows was not allowed in the room where the audit was occurring, Fuchs said, but he was able to peer through the window of the door.

Trump called the chief investigator the following day.

Raffensperger announced the audit on Dec. 14, after allegations surfaced that ballots were accepted in Cobb County without proper verification of voter signatures on the envelopes.

No evidence has emerged of widespread signature-matching anomalies in Cobb or elsewhere in Georgia. Raffensperger ordered the audit, he said, because his office pursues all allegations of election irregularities.

"Conducting this audit does not in any way suggest that Cobb County was not properly following election procedures or properly conducting signature matching," Chris Harvey, Raffensperger's director of elections, said at the time. "We chose Cobb County for this audit because they are well known to have one of the best election offices in the state, and starting in Cobb will help us as we embark on a statewide signature audit."

If large numbers of mismatched envelope signatures had been discovered, it would have been impossible to pair those envelopes with the ballots they contained, which are separated to protect voter privacy as required in the Georgia Constitution.

In the end, Raffensperger's investigations team, working alongside the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, found just two nonmatching signatures among more than 15,000 examined during the audit in Cobb County. The audit concluded on Dec. 29, six days after the president called the chief investigator.

Trump was steaming about the outcome of the inquiry when he spoke to Raffensperger on Jan. 2.

"Why can't we have professionals do it instead of rank amateurs who will never find anything and don't want to find anything?" the president said, according to audio obtained by The Post. "They don't want to find, you know they don't want to find anything. Someday you'll tell me the reason why, because I don't understand your reasoning, but someday you'll tell me the reason why."

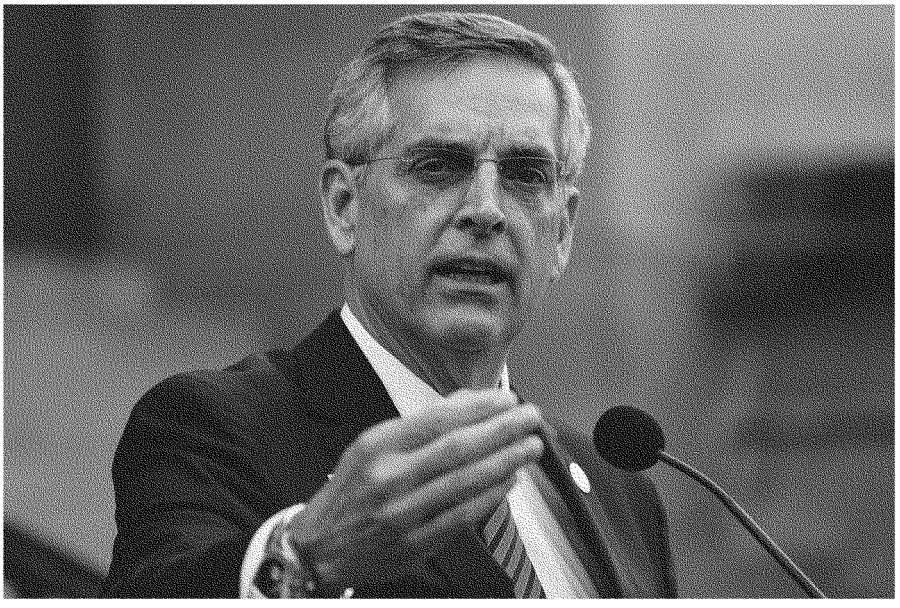
Alice Crites, Paul Kane and Mike DeBonis contributed to this report.

Ga. secretary of state says fellow Republicans are pressuring him to find ways to exclude ballots

washingtonpost.com/politics/brad-raffensperger-georgia-vote/2020/11/16/6b6cb2f4-283e-11eb-8fa2-06e7cbb145c0_story.html

By Amy Gardner

November 16, 2020



Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger said Monday that he has come under increasing pressure in recent days from fellow Republicans, including Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (S.C.), who he said questioned the validity of legally cast absentee ballots, in an effort to reverse President Trump's narrow loss in the state.

In a wide-ranging interview about the election, Raffensperger expressed exasperation over a string of baseless allegations coming from Trump and his allies about the integrity of the Georgia results, including claims that Dominion Voting Systems, the Colorado-based manufacturer of Georgia's voting machines, is a "leftist" company with ties to Venezuela that engineered thousands of Trump votes to be left out of the count.

The atmosphere has grown so contentious, Raffensperger said, that he and his wife, Tricia, have received death threats in recent days, including a text to him that read: "You better not botch this recount. Your life depends on it."

"Other than getting you angry, it's also very disillusioning," Raffensperger said of the threats, "particularly when it comes from people on my side of the aisle. Everyone that is working on this needs to elevate their speech. We need to be thoughtful and careful about what we say." He said he reported the threats to state authorities.

The pressure on Raffensperger, who has bucked his party in defending the state's voting process, comes as Georgia is in the midst of a laborious hand recount of about 5 million ballots. President-elect Joe Biden has a 14,000-vote lead in the initial count.

The normally mild-mannered Raffensperger saved his harshest language for Rep. Douglas A. Collins (R-Ga.), who is leading the president's efforts in Georgia and whom Raffensperger called a "liar" and a "charlatan."

Collins has questioned Raffensperger's handling of the vote and accused him of capitulating to Democrats by not backing allegations of voter fraud more strongly.

Raffensperger has said that every accusation of fraud will be thoroughly investigated, but that there is currently no credible evidence that fraud occurred on a broad enough scale to affect the outcome of the election.

The recount, Raffensperger said in the interview Monday, will "affirm" the results of the initial count. He said the hand-counted audit that began last week will also prove the accuracy of the Dominion machines; some counties have already reported that their hand recounts exactly match the machine tallies previously reported. Election officials in one county, Floyd, discovered about 2,600 eligible votes that were not included in the initial tallies because of a failure to upload them off a memory stick. The secretary of state's office said those votes probably would have been discovered, but it called for the resignation of the county election director.

"I'm an engineer. We look at numbers. We look at hard data," Raffensperger said. "I can't help it that a failed candidate like Collins is running around lying to everyone. He's a liar."

A spokeswoman for Collins replied to a request for comment by linking to a tweet Collins sent on Monday in which he described Raffensperger's "incompetence as Secretary of State."

Collins ran unsuccessfully for Senate this year and is blamed by some Republicans for pushing the incumbent in that race, fellow Republican Sen. Kelly Loeffler, into a runoff against the Rev. Raphael Warnock, a Democrat.

In the interview, Raffensperger also said he spoke on Friday to Graham, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who has echoed Trump's unfounded claims about voting irregularities.

In their conversation, Graham questioned Raffensperger about the state's signature-matching law and whether political bias could have prompted poll workers to accept ballots with nonmatching signatures, according to Raffensperger. Graham also asked whether Raffensperger had the power to toss all mail ballots in counties found to have higher rates of nonmatching signatures, Raffensperger said.

Raffensperger said he was stunned that Graham appeared to suggest that he find a way to toss legally cast ballots. Absent court intervention, Raffensperger doesn't have the power to do what Graham suggested because counties administer elections in Georgia.

"It sure looked like he was wanting to go down that road," Raffensperger said.

In an interview on Capitol Hill on Monday evening, Graham denied that he had suggested that Raffensperger toss legal ballots, calling that characterization "ridiculous."

But he said he did seek out the secretary of state to understand the state's signature-matching requirements. Graham said he contacted Raffensperger on his own and was not asked to do so by Trump.

"The main issue for me is: How do you protect the integrity of mail-in voting, and how does signature verification work?" he said.

"If he feels threatened by that conversation, he's got a problem," Graham added. "I actually thought it was a good conversation."

On the same day that Graham spoke to Raffensperger about signature matching, a lawsuit was filed in federal court in Georgia challenging the way county election officials check signatures and allow voters a chance to fix ballots with errors.

The suit, filed by Atlanta lawyer and Trump supporter Lin Wood, seeks to block certification of Georgia's election until all ballot envelopes are inspected.

Also that day, Trump tweeted about signature-matching in Georgia and criticized Raffensperger for his management of the state elections: "Georgia Secretary of State, a so-called Republican (RINO), won't let the people checking the ballots see the signatures for fraud. Why? Without this the whole process is very unfair and close to meaningless. Everyone knows that we won the state."

Raffensperger said he will vigorously fight the lawsuit, which would require the matching of ballot envelopes with ballots — potentially exposing individual voters' choices.

"It doesn't matter what political party or which campaign does that," Raffensperger said. "The secrecy of the vote is sacred."

The secretary of state also warned that the Republican attacks on Dominion voting machines could create issues for the state's Republican U.S. senators, Loeffler and David Perdue, who face runoffs on Jan. 5 that will be administered using the same Dominion machines.

Over the weekend, social media posts began appearing from Trump supporters questioning whether they feel comfortable using Dominion machines in the two runoff elections, which will determine which party controls the Senate.

"I don't think it's helpful when you create doubt in the election process," Raffensperger said. "People might throw up their arms and say, 'Why vote?' "

Seung Min Kim and Paul Kane contributed to this report.

Trump calls Georgia governor to pressure him for help overturning Biden's win in the state

washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-kemp-call-georgia/2020/12/05/fd8d677c-3721-11eb-8d38-6aea1adb3839_story.html

By Amy Gardner, Colby Itkowitz and Josh Dawsey December 5, 2020



President Trump called Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp (R) on Saturday morning to urge him to persuade the state legislature to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the state and asked the governor to order an audit of absentee ballot signatures, the latest brazen effort by the president to interfere in the 2020 election.

Hours before he was scheduled to hold a rally in Georgia on behalf of the state's two GOP senators, Trump pressed Kemp to call a special session of the state legislature for lawmakers to override the results and appoint electors who would back the president at the electoral college, according to two people familiar with the conversation, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the private call.

Trump also asked the governor to demand an audit of signatures on mail ballots, something Kemp has previously noted he has no power to do. Kemp declined the president's entreaty, according to the people.

The governor later referred to his conversation with Trump in a , noting that he told the president that he'd already publicly advocated for a signature audit.

Kemp's spokesman, Cody Hall, confirmed that the two men spoke. Trump campaign spokesman Tim Murtaugh declined to comment.

The latest example of Trump's extraordinary personal effort to overturn Biden's win comes as his legal team has met with resounding failure in its attempts to use the courts to upend the election. On Friday, the president and his allies suffered legal defeats in six states, including decisive rejections in Arizona and Nevada of their claims of fraud and other irregularities.

Trump was unable to stop the certification of the vote in all the states in which he has sought to contest the results, even after making personal outreach to Republican officials in Michigan.

Despite that, the president has continued to lash out at the results — particularly in Georgia, where he was furious that Republican officials certified Biden's win.

On the call Saturday, Kemp told the president that his family was mourning the death of a family friend, a staffer for Sen. Kelly Loeffler (R-Ga.) who was killed in a car crash Friday. Trump then offered his condolences, according to one of the people with knowledge of the conversation. But that was not the purpose of the president's call, the person added: "This was not a condolence call. This was Kemp being chewed out by Trump."

Kathleen Clark, a law professor at Washington University in St. Louis, said that if Trump invoked his federal authority in his conversation Saturday with Kemp, or made the call from the Oval Office, he could have violated criminal provisions of the Hatch Act, which prohibits government officials from political activity in their official roles.

Though the civil penalties of the Hatch Act do not apply to the president, the criminal provisions do, she noted.

Even if Trump did not commit a crime, Clark added, his actions threaten to disenfranchise voters in Georgia who participated in the November election.

"Such a move would undermine public confidence in our constitutional system and do damage to future elections," she said.

The president's attempts to pressure Kemp come amid high political stakes in Georgia, where the U.S. Senate incumbents, both Republicans, face runoff elections against Democrats on Jan. 5 that could determine which party controls the upper chamber.

Trump headlined a campaign rally for Loeffler and Sen. David Perdue in the state Saturday night — his first major political event since before the Nov. 3 election.

GOP officials were working frantically behind the scenes to try to keep the president on script at the rally, worried that he would use the forum to attack Kemp and other state GOP officials who have resisted his pressure, according to a person familiar with the discussions.

But the president remained fixated on his loss in the state, promoting baseless claims that Biden's win was based on fraud, and appears furious with Kemp, a onetime ally.

At his Saturday rally in Valdosta, Ga., Trump briefly lashed out at Kemp for not embracing the president's allegations of fraud.

"Your governor could stop it very easily if he knew what the hell he was doing," the president said. He added: "So far we haven't been able to find the people in Georgia willing to do the right thing."

The Georgia governor has become a punching bag for the president, who called him "hapless" on Twitter and told aides in recent days that Kemp was a "moron," according to the person. He also complained to aides that Kemp should not have appointed Loeffler to succeed retiring Sen. Johnny Isakson in late 2019, saying he does not think she is a good candidate.

When asked to comment on Trump's remarks, Loeffler campaign spokeswoman Caitlin O'Dea said, "Tune in tonight and stop reporting fake news."

In the run-up to the rally, the president kept up his attacks on state GOP officials.

On Saturday, Trump tweeted: "I will easily & quickly win Georgia if Governor @BrianKempGA or the Secretary of State permit a simple signature verification. Has not been done and will show large scale discrepancies. Why are these two "Republicans" saying no? If we win Georgia, everything else falls in place!"

In response, Kemp tweeted: "As I told the President this morning, I've publicly called for a signature audit three times (11/20, 11/24, 12/3) to restore confidence in our election process and to ensure that only legal votes are counted in Georgia."

Hours later, the president tweeted back: "But you never got the signature verification! Your people are refusing to do what you ask. What are they hiding? At least immediately ask for a Special Session of the Legislature. That you can easily, and immediately, do. #Transparency."

Trump and his allies have claimed with no evidence that county election officials in Georgia accepted ballots where the voter signatures on envelopes did not match the voter signatures on file.

Even if officials audited signatures on ballot envelopes, it would be impossible to match them with the ballots themselves, which are separated from envelopes during processing to protect voters' privacy, as required in the Georgia Constitution.

Kemp has requested that Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger conduct an audit, but the governor's office also has made clear that Kemp personally has no power to order such a move.

"Georgia law prohibits the governor from interfering in elections. The Secretary of State, who is an elected constitutional officer, has oversight over elections that cannot be overridden by executive order," Kemp's spokesman said several days ago in response to Trump's public demands.

Raffensperger, a Republican, has strongly defended the integrity of Georgia's election, despite pressure from other GOP leaders, including the state's senators, who demanded his resignation. His office has said there is no specific evidence the signature match process was done improperly.

Earlier last week, a top official in Raffensperger's office called on Trump to stop spreading false claims about fraud, saying the rhetoric was leading to threats of violence against election workers.

Biden secured his victory in Georgia by roughly 12,000 votes. A second recount of ballots requested by the Trump campaign is expected to be finalized this week and confirm his lead.

Nevertheless, the Trump campaign filed a new lawsuit Friday in Superior Court of Fulton County seeking to invalidate Biden's win. The suit calls for either a new election or for the courts to allow the GOP-majority state legislature to appoint electors.

Trump attorney Rudolph W. Giuliani pressed GOP lawmakers to assert such a role when he addressed a state Senate hearing on the election last week.

"State law doesn't in any way prevent you, the legislature, from immediately taking this over and deciding this," Giuliani said at the hearing.

Democratic state Sen. Elena Parent pushed back at the idea that the legislature could choose to override the popular vote and appoint electors sympathetic to Trump.

"According to the law of the state of Georgia, we do not have the power to submit alternate electors. The provision in the old law is quite clear," said Parent, who has been the target of death threats on far-right online sites.

A handful of GOP lawmakers have called for a special session, but the idea has been shot down by Kemp and other top Republican leaders.

Lawyers for Raffensperger have determined that current law gives Georgia legislators no role in seating electors. And the governor does not think the legislature has the power to change the law with retroactive effect, according to people familiar with his views.

‘Someone’s going to get killed’: GOP election official in Georgia blames President Trump for fostering violent threats

washingtonpost.com/politics/georgia-official-trump-election/2020/12/01/f1d5c962-3427-11eb-b59c-adb7153d10c2_story.html

By Amy Gardner and Keith Newell December 2, 2020



A top Republican election official in Georgia lashed out at President Trump during a news conference Tuesday in Atlanta, blaming him for a flood of threats that have besieged his office and calling on the president and other Republicans to condemn the behavior.

Gabriel Sterling, a voting systems manager for Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, was visibly angry and shaken as he approached a lectern in the Georgia Capitol.

“Mr. President, you have not condemned these actions or this language,” he said. “Senators, you have not condemned this language or these actions. . . . Stop inspiring people to commit potential acts of violence.”

He added: “That shouldn’t be too much to ask for people who ask us to give them responsibility.”

Sterling's public chastisement represents one of the strongest rebukes yet of Trump's baseless attacks on the election's integrity by a member of his own party.

The episode revealed a fissure that has been widening within the Republican Party for weeks as Trump has claimed falsely, again and again, that President-elect Joe Biden won through election fraud.

Although more and more local and state Republicans have acknowledged Biden's victory — and said they have seen no evidence of widespread fraud — most national GOP officials, including Georgia's two U.S. senators seeking reelection in twin runoffs on Jan. 5, have refused to do so.

In addition to calling out Trump by name, Sterling also demanded that the two senators, David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler, denounce the threats that flowed into his office after Trump began attacking Raffensperger for failing to repeat his false accusations of fraud.

"When the president called Brad Raffensperger, who is a fine, upstanding, lifelong Republican, an 'enemy of the people,' that helped open the floodgates to this kind of crap," Sterling said. "It takes people who are already spun up. . . . There are some nut balls out there."

A Perdue spokeswoman, Casey Black, said in a statement that her boss "condemns violence of any kind, against anybody. Period." But she added: "We won't apologize for addressing the obvious issues with the way our state conducts its elections."

A Loeffler spokesman tweeted that it is "ridiculous" to suggest that the senator wouldn't condemn physical threats but said the senator "won't apologize" for calling out "inaction and lack of accountability."

Trump campaign spokesman Tim Murtaugh said the campaign condemns threats or violence "if that has happened" — but remains "focused on ensuring that all legal votes are counted and all illegal votes are not."

Neither senator has offered any evidence of fraud or mismanagement by Raffensperger, nor a rationale for their call for his resignation, which came after Trump began attacking him and Gov. Brian Kemp, also a Republican, for their failure to support the president's claims of fraud. Trump is scheduled to travel to Georgia on Saturday to campaign on behalf of Loeffler and Perdue.

Late Tuesday night, Trump tweeted in response to Sterling's call for him to condemn threats: "Rigged Election. Show signatures and envelopes. Expose the massive voter fraud in Georgia. What is Secretary of State and @BrianKempGA afraid of. They know what we'll find!!!"

For his part, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) refused Tuesday to take any questions about the presidential election or Trump's claims, talking only about legislation that Congress is trying to pass this month. "The future will take care of itself," McConnell told reporters, when pressed about Trump's statements.

When asked for comment on Sterling's news conference, McConnell's office declined to comment, referring to his earlier remarks.

Sterling, 50, is a Georgia native, a graduate of the University of Georgia and a Republican who has worked as a political consultant and served on the Sandy Springs City Council, north of Atlanta.

Raffensperger, his boss, was among the first Republicans to speak out against Trump's false claims of voter fraud, defending the integrity of Georgia's elections and calling out Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) for suggesting that he find a way to invalidate tens of thousands of legally cast absentee ballots.

That stance has drawn a fusillade of online attacks and personal threats against the secretary of state and others in his office.

But Sterling said Tuesday that for him, the last straw came when a 20-year-old technician for the state's voting machine contractor, Dominion Voting Systems, was targeted by far-right social media users who falsely claimed they'd caught him on camera manipulating election data. Some people called for the worker's imprisonment, torture or execution. One tweet accused him of treason and included an animated image of a hanging noose.

When Sterling stepped to the lectern inside the Georgia Capitol on Tuesday afternoon, he was noticeably upset.

"It has all. Gone. Too. Far," Sterling said, adding: "It has to stop."

"This kid took a job," he added, his voice growing louder. "He just took a job. And it's just wrong. I can't begin to explain the level of anger I have right now over this. Every American, every Georgian, Republican or Democrat alike, should have the same level of anger."

Sterling specifically called out Joseph diGenova, a conservative lawyer and Trump ally who on Monday appeared to call for the execution of former federal cybersecurity official Chris Krebs during an appearance on a radio talk show. DiGenova later said he was joking.

"Someone's going to get hurt," Sterling said. "Someone's going to get shot. Someone's going to get killed."

Sterling said he was off script and at one point quipped, "I've probably stepped out of line, but I'm kind of pissed."

But Raffensperger gave Sterling the green light to speak his mind, Jordan Fuchs, a deputy secretary of state, said in an interview. "We pointed him in a direction and said, 'Just do your thing.' "

Fuchs said Raffensperger's wife, Tricia, has received "sexualized death threats." Members of far-right groups have been found trespassing at the Raffenspergers' home. Someone broke into the home of one of their adult children and turned all the lights on, "sending a clear signal that they can get access to their house," Fuchs said. And members of Fuchs's staff have had to filter through "thousands" of emails saying, "You should be shot" and "You should be hanged," she said.

All of it has left her and her colleagues bewildered by and infuriated with their own party.

"They need to defend what they're doing," Fuchs said. "They need to defend the coalition that they have aligned with."

Sterling also had another message for Trump that Republicans in Washington have been unwilling to deliver: The election is over.

"Mr. President, as the secretary said yesterday, people aren't giving you the best advice on what's actually going on on the ground," he said. "It's time to look forward. If you want to run for reelection in four years, fine, do it. But everything we're seeing right now — there's not a path."

Sterling declined to name the Dominion contractor who had been threatened. The individual's name was surfaced by Ron Watkins, whose father, Jim, owns the far-right Internet message board 8kun, which has been linked to white supremacism, neo-Nazism and QAnon.

Shortly after midnight Tuesday, Watkins posted what he called "a smoking-gun video" that he claimed showed the Dominion worker manipulating Georgia voting data.

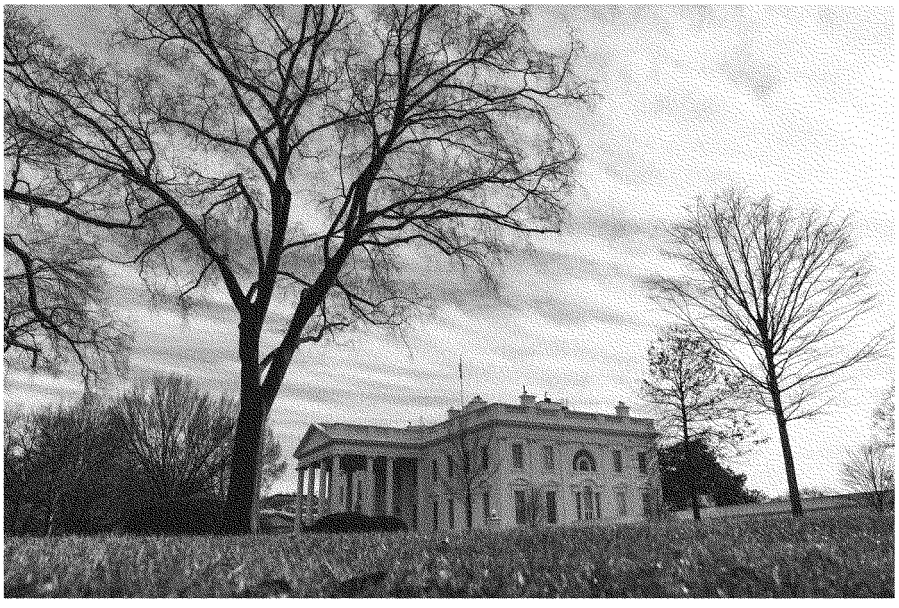
In fact, the undated video — which was recorded at a distance and includes a man and woman offering ongoing commentary on the "nerd boy" as he works inside an election office — shows a man simply using a computer and thumb drive.

Drew Harwell, Michelle Ye Hee Lee, Paul Kane and Donna Cassata contributed to this report.

Here's the full transcript and audio of the call between Trump and Raffensperger

washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-raffensperger-call-transcript-georgia-vote/2021/01/03/2768e0cc-4ddd-11eb-83e3-322644d82356_story.html

By Amy Gardner and Paulina Firozi January 3, 2021



About 3 p.m. Saturday, President Trump held an hour-long call with Brad Raffensperger, Georgia's secretary of state, in which he repeatedly urged him to alter the outcome of the presidential vote in the state. He was joined on the call by White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and several lawyers, including longtime conservative attorney Cleta Mitchell and Georgia-based attorney Kurt Hilbert. Raffensperger was joined by his office's general counsel, Ryan Germany, and Deputy Secretary of State Jordan Fuchs.

The Washington Post obtained a copy of a recording of the call. This transcript has been edited to remove the name of an individual about whom Trump makes unsubstantiated claims.

Meadows: Okay. Alright. Mr. President, everyone is on the line. This is Mark Meadows, the chief of staff. Just so we all are aware. On the line is secretary of state and two other individuals. Jordan and Mr. Germany with him. You also have the attorneys that represent

the president, Kurt and Alex and Cleta Mitchell — who is not the attorney of record but has been involved — myself and then the president. So Mr. President, I'll turn it over to you.

Trump: Okay, thank you very much. Hello Brad and Ryan and everybody. We appreciate the time and the call. So we've spent a lot of time on this, and if we could just go over some of the numbers, I think it's pretty clear that we won. We won very substantially in Georgia. You even see it by rally size, frankly. We'd be getting 25-30,000 people a rally, and the competition would get less than 100 people. And it never made sense.

But we have a number of things. We have at least 2 or 3 — anywhere from 250 to 300,000 ballots were dropped mysteriously into the rolls. Much of that had to do with Fulton County, which hasn't been checked. We think that if you check the signatures — a real check of the signatures going back in Fulton County — you'll find at least a couple of hundred thousand of forged signatures of people who have been forged. And we are quite sure that's going to happen.

Another tremendous number. We're going to have an accurate number over the next two days with certified accountants. But an accurate number will be given, but it's in the 50s of thousands — and that's people that went to vote and they were told they can't vote because they've already been voted for. And it's a very sad thing. They walked out complaining. But the number's large. We'll have it for you. But it's much more than the number of 11,779 that's — the current margin is only 11,779. Brad, I think you agree with that, right? That's something I think everyone — at least that's a number that everyone agrees on.

But that's the difference in the votes. But we've had hundreds of thousands of ballots that we're able to actually — we'll get you a pretty accurate number. You don't need much of a number because the number that in theory I lost by, the margin would be 11,779. But you also have a substantial numbers of people, thousands and thousands, who went to the voting place on November 3, were told they couldn't vote, were told they couldn't vote because a ballot had been put on their name. And you know that's very, very, very, very sad.

We had, I believe it's about 4,502 voters who voted but who weren't on the voter registration list, so it's 4,502 who voted, but they weren't on the voter registration roll, which they had to be. You had 18,325 vacant address voters. The address was vacant, and they're not allowed to be counted. That's 18,325.

Smaller number — you had 904 who only voted where they had just a P.O. — a post office box number — and they had a post office box number, and that's not allowed. We had at least 18,000 — that's on tape, we had them counted very painstakingly — 18,000 voters having to do with [name]. She's a vote scammer, a professional vote scammer and hustler [name]. That was the tape that's been shown all over the world that makes everybody look bad, you, me and everybody else.

Where they got — number one they said very clearly and it's been reported that they said there was a major water main break. Everybody fled the area. And then they came back, [name] and her daughter and a few people. There were no Republican poll watchers. Actually, there were no Democrat poll watchers, I guess they were them. But there were no Democrats, either, and there was no law enforcement. Late in the morning, early in the morning, they went to the table with the black robe and the black shield, and they pulled out the votes. Those votes were put there a number of hours before — the table was put there — I think it was, Brad, you would know, it was probably eight hours or seven hours before, and then it was stuffed with votes.

They weren't in an official voter box; they were in what looked to be suitcases or trunks, suitcases, but they weren't in voter boxes. The minimum number it could be because we watched it, and they watched it certified in slow motion instant replay if you can believe it, but slow motion, and it was magnified many times over, and the minimum it was 18,000 ballots, all for Biden.

You had out-of-state voters. They voted in Georgia, but they were from out of state, of 4,925. You had absentee ballots sent to vacant, they were absentee ballots sent to vacant addresses. They had nothing on them about addresses, that's 2,326.

And you had dropboxes, which is very bad. You had dropboxes that were picked up. We have photographs, and we have affidavits from many people.

I don't know if you saw the hearings, but you have dropboxes where the box was picked up but not delivered for three days. So all sorts of things could have happened to that box, including, you know, putting in the votes that you wanted. So there were many infractions, and the bottom line is, many, many times the 11,779 margin that they said we lost by — we had vast, I mean the state is in turmoil over this.

And I know you would like to get to the bottom of it, although I saw you on television today, and you said that you found nothing wrong. I mean, you know, and I didn't lose the state, Brad. People have been saying that it was the highest vote ever. There was no way. A lot of the political people said that there's no way they beat me. And they beat me. They beat me in the . . . As you know, every single state, we won every state. We won every statehouse in the country. We held the Senate, which is shocking to people, although we'll see what happens tomorrow or in a few days.

And we won the House, but we won every single statehouse, and we won Congress, which was supposed to lose 15 seats, and they gained, I think 16 or 17 or something. I think there's a now difference of five. There was supposed to be a difference substantially more. But politicians in every state, but politicians in Georgia have given affidavits and are going to that, that there was no way that they beat me in the election, that the people came out, in

fact, they were expecting to lose, and then they ended up winning by a lot because of the coattails. And they said there's no way, that they've done many polls prior to the election, that there was no way that they won.

Ballots were dropped in massive numbers. And we're trying to get to those numbers and we will have them.

They'll take a period of time. Certified. But but they're massive numbers. And far greater than the 11,779.

The other thing, dead people. So dead people voted, and I think the number is close to 5,000 people. And they went to obituaries. They went to all sorts of methods to come up with an accurate number, and a minimum is close to about 5,000 voters.

The bottom line is, when you add it all up and then you start adding, you know, 300,000 fake ballots. Then the other thing they said is in Fulton County and other areas. And this may or may not be true . . . this just came up this morning, that they are burning their ballots, that they are shredding, shredding ballots and removing equipment. They're changing the equipment on the Dominion machines and, you know, that's not legal.

And they supposedly shredded I think they said 300 pounds of, 3,000 pounds of ballots. And that just came to us as a report today. And it is a very sad situation.

But Brad, if you took the minimum numbers where many, many times above the 11,779, and many of those numbers are certified, or they will be certified, but they are certified. And those are numbers that are there, that exist. And that beat the margin of loss, they beat it, I mean, by a lot, and people should be happy to have an accurate count instead of an election where there's turmoil.

I mean there's turmoil in Georgia and other places. You're not the only one, I mean, we have other states that I believe will be flipping to us very shortly. And this is something that — you know, as an example, I think it in Detroit, I think there's a section, a good section of your state actually, which we're not sure so we're not going to report it yet. But in Detroit, we had, I think it was, 139 percent of the people voted. That's not too good.

In Pennsylvania, they had well over 200,000 more votes than they had people voting. And that doesn't play too well, and the legislature there is, which is Republican, is extremely activist and angry. I mean, there were other things also that were almost as bad as that. But they had as an example, in Michigan, a tremendous number of dead people that voted. I think it was, I think, Mark, it was 18,000. Some unbelievably high number, much higher than yours, you were in the 4-5,000 category.

And that was checked out laboriously by going through, by going through the obituary columns in the newspapers.

So I guess with all of it being said, Brad, the bottom line, and provisional ballots, again, you know, you'll have to tell me about the provisional ballots, but we have a lot of people that were complaining that they weren't able to vote because they were already voted for. These are great people.

And, you know, they were shellshocked. I don't know if you call that provisional ballots. In some states, we had a lot of provisional ballot situations where people were given a provisional ballot because when they walked in on November 3 and they were already voted for.

So that's it. I mean, we have many, many times the number of votes necessary to win the state. And we won the state, and we won it very substantially and easily, and we're getting, we have, much of this is a very certified, far more certified than we need. But we're getting additional numbers certified, too. And we're getting pictures of dropboxes being delivered and delivered late. Delivered three days later, in some cases, plus we have many affidavits to that effect.

Meadows: So, Mr. President, if I might be able to jump in, and I'll give Brad a chance. Mr. Secretary, obviously there is, there are allegations where we believe that not every vote or fair vote and legal vote was counted, and that's at odds with the representation from the secretary of state's office.

What I'm hopeful for is there some way that we can, we can find some kind of agreement to look at this a little bit more fully? You know the president mentioned Fulton County.

But in some of these areas where there seems to be a difference of where the facts seem to lead, and so Mr. Secretary, I was hopeful that, you know, in the spirit of cooperation and compromise, is there something that we can at least have a discussion to look at some of these allegations to find a path forward that's less litigious?

Raffensperger: Well, I listened to what the president has just said. President Trump, we've had several lawsuits, and we've had to respond in court to the lawsuits and the contentions. We don't agree that you have won. And we don't — I didn't agree about the 200,000 number that you'd mentioned. I'll go through that point by point.

What we have done is we gave our state Senate about one and a half hours of our time going through the election issue by issue and then on the state House, the government affairs committee, we gave them about two and a half hours of our time, going back point by point on all the issues of contention. And then just a few days ago, we met with our U.S. congressmen, Republican congressmen, and we gave them about two hours of our time talking about this past election. Going back, primarily what you've talked about here focused in on primarily, I believe, is the absentee ballot process. I don't believe that you're really questioning the Dominion machines. Because we did a hand re-tally, a 100 percent re-tally of

all the ballots, and compared them to what the machines said and came up with virtually the same result. Then we did the recount, and we got virtually the same result. So I guess we can probably take that off the table.

I don't think there's an issue about that.

Trump: Well, Brad. Not that there's not an issue, because we have a big issue with Dominion in other states and perhaps in yours. But we haven't felt we needed to go there. And just to, you know, maybe put a little different spin on what Mark is saying, Mark Meadows, yeah we'd like to go further, but we don't really need to. We have all the votes we need.

You know, we won the state. If you took, these are the most minimal numbers, the numbers that I gave you, those are numbers that are certified, your absentee ballots sent to vacant addresses, your out-of-state voters, 4,925. You know when you add them up, it's many more times, it's many times the 11,779 number. So we could go through, we have not gone through your Dominion. So we can't give them blessing. I mean, in other states, we think we found tremendous corruption with Dominion machines, but we'll have to see.

But we only lost the state by that number, 11,000 votes, and 779. So with that being said, with just what we have, with just what we have, we're giving you minimal, minimal numbers. We're doing the most conservative numbers possible; we're many times, many, many times above the margin. And so we don't really have to, Mark, I don't think we have to go through . . .

Meadows: Right

Trump: Because what's the difference between winning the election by two votes and winning it by half a million votes. I think I probably did win it by half a million. You know, one of the things that happened, Brad, is we have other people coming in now from Alabama and from South Carolina and from other states, and they're saying it's impossible for you to have lost Georgia. We won. You know in Alabama, we set a record, got the highest vote ever. In Georgia, we set a record with a massive amount of votes. And they say it's not possible to have lost Georgia.

And I could tell you by our rallies. I could tell you by the rally I'm having on Monday night, the place, they already have lines of people standing out front waiting. It's just not possible to have lost Georgia. It's not possible. When I heard it was close, I said there's no way. But they dropped a lot of votes in there late at night. You know that, Brad. And that's what we are working on very, very stringently. But regardless of those votes, with all of it being said, we lost by essentially 11,000 votes, and we have many more votes already calculated and certified, too.

And so I just don't know, you know, Mark, I don't know what's the purpose. I won't give Dominion a pass because we found too many bad things. But we don't need Dominion or anything else. We have won this election in Georgia based on all of this. And there's nothing wrong with saying that, Brad. You know, I mean, having the correct — the people of Georgia are angry. And these numbers are going to be repeated on Monday night. Along with others that we're going to have by that time, which are much more substantial even. And the people of Georgia are angry, the people of the country are angry. And there's nothing wrong with saying that, you know, that you've recalculated. Because the 2,236 in absentee ballots. I mean, they're all exact numbers that were done by accounting firms, law firms, etc. And even if you cut 'em in half, cut 'em in half and cut 'em in half again, it's more votes than we need.

Raffensperger: Well, Mr. President, the challenge that you have is the data you have is wrong. We talked to the congressmen, and they were surprised.

But they — I guess there was a person named Mr. Braynard who came to these meetings and presented data, and he said that there was dead people, I believe it was upward of 5,000. The actual number were two. Two. Two people that were dead that voted. So that's wrong.

Trump: Well, Cleta, how do you respond to that? Maybe you tell me?

Mitchell: Well, I would say, Mr. Secretary, one of the things that we have requested and what we said was, if you look, if you read our petition, it said that we took the names and birth years, and we had certain information available to us. We have asked from your office for records that only you have, and so we said there is a universe of people who have the same name and same birth year and died.

But we don't have the records that you have. And one of the things that we have been suggesting formally and informally for weeks now is for you to make available to us the records that would be necessary —

Trump: But, Cleta, even before you do that, and not even including that, that's why I hardly even included that number, although in one state, we have a tremendous amount of dead people. So I don't know — I'm sure we do in Georgia, too. I'm sure we do in Georgia, too.

But we're so far ahead. We're so far ahead of these numbers, even the phony ballots of [name] , known scammer. You know the Internet? You know what was trending on the Internet? "Where's [name]?" Because they thought she'd be in jail. "Where's [name]?" It's crazy, it's crazy. That was. The minimum number is 18,000 for [name] , but they think it's probably about 56,000, but the minimum number is 18,000 on the [name] night where she ran back in there when everybody was gone and stuffed, she stuffed the ballot boxes. Let's face it, Brad, I mean. They did it in slow motion replay magnified, right? She stuffed the ballot boxes. They were stuffed like nobody has ever seen them stuffed before.

So there's a term for it when it's a machine instead of a ballot box, but she stuffed the machine. She stuffed the ballot. Each ballot went three times, they were showing: Here's ballot No 1. Here it is a second time, third time, next ballot.

I mean, look. Brad. We have a new tape that we're going to release. It's devastating. And by the way, that one event, that one event is much more than the 11,000 votes that we're talking about. It's, you know, that one event was a disaster. And it's just, you know, but it was, it was something, it can't be disputed. And again, we have a version that you haven't seen, but it's magnified. It's magnified, and you can see everything. For some reason, they put it in three times, each ballot, and I don't know why. I don't know why three times. Why not five times, right? Go ahead.

Raffensperger: You're talking about the State Farm video. And I think it's extremely unfortunate that Rudy Giuliani or his people, they sliced and diced that video and took it out of context. The next day, we brought in WSB-TV, and we let them show, see the full run of tape, and what you'll see, the events that transpired are nowhere near what was projected by, you know —

Trump: But where were the poll watchers, Brad? There were no poll watchers there. There were no Democrats or Republicans. There was no security there.

It was late in the evening, late in the, early in the morning, and there was nobody else in the room. Where were the poll watchers, and why did they say a water main broke, which they did and which was reported in the newspapers? They said they left. They ran out because of a water main break, and there was no water main. There was nothing. There was no break. There was no water main break. But we're, if you take out everything, where were the Republican poll watchers, even where were the Democrat pollwatchers, because there were none.

And then you say, well, they left their station, you know, if you look at the tape, and this was, this was reviewed by professional police and detectives and other people, when they left in a rush, everybody left in a rush because of the water main, but everybody left in a rush. These people left their station.

When they came back, they didn't go to their station. They went to the apron, wrapped around the table, under which were thousands and thousands of ballots in a box that was not an official or a sealed box. And then they took those. They went back to a different station. So if they would have come back, they would have walked to their station, and they would have continued to work. But they couldn't do even that because that's illegal, because they had no Republican pollwatchers. And remember, her reputation is — she's known all over the Internet, Brad. She's known all over.

I'm telling you, "Where's [name] " was one of the hot items . . . [name] They knew her. "Where's [name]?" So Brad, there can be no justification for that. And I, you know, I give everybody the benefit of the doubt. But that was — and Brad, why did they put the votes in three times? You know, they put 'em in three times.

Raffensperger: Mr. President, they did not put that. We did an audit of that, and we proved conclusively that they were not scanned three times.

Trump: Where was everybody else at that late time in the morning? Where was everybody? Where were the Republicans? Where were the security guards? Were the people that were there just a little while before when everyone ran out of the room. How come we had no security in the room. Why did they run to the bottom of the table? Why do they run there and just open the skirt and rip out the votes. I mean, Brad. And they were sitting there, I think for five hours or something like that, the votes.

Raffensperger: Mr. President, we'll send you the link from WSB.

Trump: I don't care about the link. I don't need it. Brad, I have a much better —

Mitchell: I will tell you. I've seen the tape. The full tape. So has Alex. We've watched it. And what we saw and what we've confirmed in the timing is that they made everybody leave — we have sworn affidavits saying that. And then they began to process ballots. And our estimate is that there were roughly 18,000 ballots. We don't know that. If you know that —

Trump: — it was 18,000 ballots, but they used each one three times.

Mitchell: Well, I don't know about that, but I know —

Trump: — well, I do, because we had ours magnified out —

Mitchell: I've watched the entire tape.

Trump: — but nobody can make a case for that, Brad. Nobody. I mean, look, that's, you'd have to be a child to think anything other than that. Just a child. I mean you have your never-Trumper U.S. attorney there —

Mitchell: — how many ballots, Mr. Secretary, are you saying were processed then?

Raffensperger: We had GBI . . . investigate that.

Germany: We had our — this is Ryan Germany. We had our law enforcement officers talk to everyone who was, who was there after that event came to light. GBI was with them as well as FBI agents.

Trump: Well, there's no way they could — then they're incompetent. They're either dishonest or incompetent, okay?

Mitchell: Well, what did they find?

Trump: There's only two answers, dishonesty or incompetence. There's just no way. Look. There's no way. And on the other thing, I said too, there is no way. I mean, there's no way that these things could have been, you know, you have all these different people that voted, but they don't live in Georgia anymore. What was that number, Cleta? That was a pretty good number, too.

Mitchell: The number who have registered out of state after they moved from Georgia. And so they had a date when they moved from Georgia, they registered to vote out of state, and then it's like 4,500, I don't have that number right in front of me.

Trump: And then they came back in, and they voted.

Mitchell: And voted. Yeah.

Trump: I thought that was a large number, though. It was in the 20s.

Germany: We've been going through each of those as well, and those numbers that we got, that Ms. Mitchell was just saying, they're not accurate. Every one we've been through are people that lived in Georgia, moved to a different state, but then moved back to Georgia legitimately. And in many cases —

Trump: How may people do that? They moved out, and then they said, "Ah, to hell with it, I'll move back." You know, it doesn't sound like a very normal . . . you mean, they moved out, and what, they missed it so much that they wanted to move back in? It's crazy.

Germany: They moved back in years ago. This was not like something just before the election. So there's something about that data that, it's just not accurate.

Trump: Well, I don't know, all I know is that it is certified. And they moved out of Georgia, and they voted. It didn't say they moved back in, Cleta, did it?

Mitchell: No, but I mean, we're looking at the voter registration. Again, if you have additional records, we've been asking for that, but you haven't shared any of that with us. You just keep saying you investigated the allegations.

Trump: Cleta, a lot of it you don't need to be shared. I mean, to be honest, they should share it. They should share it because you want to get to an honest election.

I won this election by hundreds of thousands of votes. There's no way I lost Georgia. There's no way. We won by hundreds of thousands of votes. I'm just going by small numbers, when you add them up, they're many times the 11,000. But I won that state by hundreds of thousands of votes.

Do you think it's possible that they shredded ballots in Fulton County? Because that's what the rumor is. And also that Dominion took out machines. That Dominion is really moving fast to get rid of their, uh, machinery.

Do you know anything about that? Because that's illegal, right?

Germany: This is Ryan Germany. No, Dominion has not moved any machinery out of Fulton County.

Trump: But have they moved the inner parts of the machines and replaced them with other parts?

Germany: No.

Trump: Are you sure, Ryan?

Germany: I'm sure. I'm sure, Mr. President.

Trump: What about, what about the ballots. The shredding of the ballots. Have they been shredding ballots?

Germany: The only investigation that we have into that — they have not been shredding any ballots. There was an issue in Cobb County where they were doing normal office shredding, getting rid of old stuff, and we investigated that. But this stuff from, you know, from you know past elections.

Trump: It doesn't pass the smell test because we hear they're shredding thousands and thousands of ballots, and now what they're saying, "Oh, we're just cleaning up the office." You know.

Raffensperger: Mr. President, the problem you have with social media, they — people can say anything.

Trump: Oh this isn't social media. This is Trump media. It's not social media. It's really not; it's not social media. I don't care about social media. I couldn't care less. Social media is Big Tech. Big Tech is on your side, you know. I don't even know why you have a side because you should want to have an accurate election. And you're a Republican.

Raffensperger: We believe that we do have an accurate election.

Trump: No, no you don't. No, no you don't. You don't have. Not even close. You're off by hundreds of thousands of votes. And just on the small numbers, you're off on these numbers, and these numbers can't be just — well, why wont? — Okay. So you sent us into Cobb County for signature verification, right? You sent us into Cobb County, which we didn't want to go into. And you said it would be open to the public. So we had our experts there, they weren't

allowed into the room. But we didn't want Cobb County. We wanted Fulton County. And you wouldn't give it to us. Now, why aren't we doing signature — and why can't it be open to the public?

And why can't we have professionals do it instead of rank amateurs who will never find anything and don't want to find anything? They don't want to find, you know they don't want to find anything. Someday you'll tell me the reason why, because I don't understand your reasoning, but someday you'll tell me the reason why. But why don't you want to find?

Germany: Mr. President, we chose Cobb County —

Trump: Why don't you want to find . . . What?

Germany: Sorry, go ahead.

Trump: So why did you do Cobb County? We didn't even request — we requested Fulton County, not Cobb County. Go ahead, please. Go ahead.

Germany: We chose Cobb County because that was the only county where there's been any evidence submitted that the signature verification was not properly done.

Trump: No, but I told you. We're not, we're not saying that.

Mitchell: We did say that.

Trump: Fulton County. Look. Stacey, in my opinion, Stacey is as dishonest as they come. She has outplayed you . . . at everything. She got you to sign a totally unconstitutional agreement, which is a disastrous agreement. You can't check signatures. I can't imagine you're allowed to do harvesting, I guess, in that agreement. That agreement is a disaster for this country. But she got you somehow to sign that thing, and she has outsmarted you at every step.

And I hate to imagine what's going to happen on Monday or Tuesday, but it's very scary to people. You know, when the ballots flow in out of nowhere. It's very scary to people. That consent decree is a disaster. It's a disaster. A very good lawyer who examined it said they've never seen anything like it.

Raffensperger: Harvesting is still illegal in the state of Georgia. And that settlement agreement did not change that one iota.

Trump: It's not a settlement agreement, it's a consent decree. It even says consent decree on it, doesn't it? It uses the term consent decree. It doesn't say settlement agreement. It's a consent decree. It's a disaster.

Raffensperger: It's a settlement agreement.

Trump: What's written on top of it?

Raffensperger: Ryan?

Germany: I don't have it in front of me, but it was not entered by the court, it's not a court order.

Trump: But Ryan, it's called a consent decree, is that right? On the paper. Is that right?

Germany: I don't. I don't. I don't believe so, but I don't have it in front of me.

Trump: Okay, whatever, it's a disaster. It's a disaster. Look. Here's the problem. We can go through signature verification, and we'll find hundreds of thousands of signatures, if you let us do it. And the only way you can do it, as you know, is to go to the past. But you didn't do that in Cobb County. You just looked at one page compared to another. The only way you can do a signature verification is go from the one that signed it on November whatever. Recently. And compare it to two years ago, four years ago, six years ago, you know, or even one. And you'll find that you have many different signatures. But in Fulton, where they dumped ballots, you will find that you have many that aren't even signed and you have many that are forgeries.

Okay, you know that. You know that. You have no doubt about that. And you will find you will be at 11,779 within minutes because Fulton County is totally corrupt, and so is she totally corrupt.

And they're going around playing you and laughing at you behind your back, Brad, whether you know it or not, they're laughing at you. And you've taken a state that's a Republican state, and you've made it almost impossible for a Republican to win because of cheating, because they cheated like nobody's ever cheated before. And I don't care how long it takes me, you know, we're going to have other states coming forward — pretty good.

But I won't . . . this is never . . . this is . . . We have some incredible talent said they've never seen anything . . . Now the problem is they need more time for the big numbers. But they're very substantial numbers. But I think you're going to find that they — by the way, a little information — I think you're going to find that they are shredding ballots because they have to get rid of the ballots because the ballots are unsigned. The ballots are corrupt, and they're brand new, and they don't have seals, and there's a whole thing with the ballots. But the ballots are corrupt.

And you are going to find that they are — which is totally illegal — it is more illegal for you than it is for them because, you know, what they did and you're not reporting it. That's a criminal, that's a criminal offense. And you can't let that happen. That's a big risk to you and to Ryan, your lawyer. And that's a big risk. But they are shredding ballots, in my opinion, based on what I've heard. And they are removing machinery, and they're moving it as fast as they can, both of which are criminal finds. And you can't let it happen, and you are letting it

happen. You know, I mean, I'm notifying you that you're letting it happen. So look. All I want to do is this. I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have because we won the state.

And flipping the state is a great testament to our country because, you know, this is — it's a testament that they can admit to a mistake or whatever you want to call it. If it was a mistake, I don't know. A lot of people think it wasn't a mistake. It was much more criminal than that. But it's a big problem in Georgia, and it's not a problem that's going away. I mean, you know, it's not a problem that's going away.

Germany: This is Ryan. We're looking into every one of those things that you mentioned.

Trump: Good. But if you find it, you've got to say it, Ryan.

Germany: . . . Let me tell you what we are seeing. What we're seeing is not at all what you're describing. These are investigators from our office, these are investigators from GBI, and they're looking, and they're good. And that's not what they're seeing. And we'll keep looking, at all these things.

Trump: Well, you better check on the ballots because they are shredding ballots, Ryan. I'm just telling you, Ryan. They're shredding ballots. And you should look at that very carefully. Because that's so illegal. You know, you may not even believe it because it's so bad. But they're shredding ballots because they think we're going to eventually get there . . . because we'll eventually get into Fulton. In my opinion, it's never too late. . . . So, that's the story. Look, we need only 11,000 votes. We have are far more than that as it stands now. We'll have more and more. And . . . do you have provisional ballots at all, Brad? Provisional ballots?

Raffensperger: Provisional ballots are allowed by state law.

Trump: Sure, but I mean, are they counted, or did you just hold them back because they, you know, in other words, how many provisional ballots do you have in the state?

Raffensperger: We'll get you that number.

Trump: Because most of them are made out to the name Trump. Because these are people that were scammed when they came in. And we have thousands of people that have testified or that want to testify. When they came in, they were proudly going to vote on November 3. And they were told, "I'm sorry, you've already been voted for, you've already voted." The women, men started screaming, "No. I proudly voted till November 3." They said, "I'm sorry, but you've already been voted for, and you have a ballot." And these people are beside themselves. So they went out, and they filled in a provisional ballot, putting the name Trump on it.

And what about that batch of military ballots that came in. And even though I won the military by a lot, it was 100 percent Trump. I mean 100 percent Biden. Do you know about that? A large group of ballots came in, I think it was to Fulton County, and they just happened to be 100 percent for Trump — for Biden — even though Trump won the military by a lot, you know, a tremendous amount. But these ballots were 100 percent for Biden. And do you know about that? A very substantial number came in, all for Biden. Does anybody know about it?

Mitchell: I know about it, but —

Trump: Okay, Cleta, I'm not asking you, Cleta, honestly. I'm asking Brad. Do you know about the military ballots that we have confirmed now. Do you know about the military ballots that came in that were 100 percent, I mean 100 percent, for Biden. Do you know about that?

Germany: I don't know about that. I do know that we have, when military ballots come in, it's not just military, it's also military and overseas citizens. The military part of that does generally go Republican. The overseas citizen part of it generally goes very Democrat. This was a mix of 'em.

Trump: No, but this was. That's okay. But I got like 78 percent of the military. These ballots were all for . . . They didn't tell me overseas. Could be overseas, too, but I get votes overseas, too, Ryan, in all fairness. No they came in, a large batch came in, and it was, quote, 100 percent for Biden. And that is criminal. You know, that's criminal. Okay. That's another criminal, that's another of the many criminal events, many criminal events here.

I don't know, look, Brad. I got to get . . . I have to find 12,000 votes, and I have them times a lot. And therefore, I won the state. That's before we go to the next step, which is in the process of right now. You know, and I watched you this morning, and you said, well, there was no criminality.

But I mean all of this stuff is very dangerous stuff. When you talk about no criminality, I think it's very dangerous for you to say that.

I just, I just don't know why you don't want to have the votes counted as they are. Like even you when you went and did that check. And I was surprised because, you know . . . And we found a few thousand votes that were against me. I was actually surprised because the way that check was done, all you're doing, you know, recertifying existing votes and, you know, and you were given votes and you just counted them up, and you still found 3,000 that were bad. So that was sort of surprising that it came down to three or five, I don't know. Still a lot of votes. But you have to go back to check from past years with respect to signatures. And if you check with Fulton County, you'll have hundreds of thousands because they dumped ballots into Fulton County and the other county next to it.

So what are we going to do here, folks? I only need 11,000 votes. Fellas, I need 11,000 votes. Give me a break. You know, we have that in spades already. Or we can keep it going, but that's not fair to the voters of Georgia because they're going to see what happened, and they're going to see what happened. I mean, I'll, I'll take on anybody you want with regard to [name] and her lovely daughter, a very lovely young lady, I'm sure. But, but [name] . . . I will take on anybody you want. And the minimum, there were 18,000 ballots, but they used them three times. So that's, you know, a lot of votes. And they were all to Biden, by the way, that's the other thing we didn't say. You know, [name] , the one thing I forgot to say, which was the most important. You know that every single ballot she did went to Biden. You know that, right? Do you know that, by the way, Brad?

Every single ballot that she did through the machines at early, early in the morning went to Biden. Did you know that, Ryan?

Germany: That's not accurate, Mr. President.

Trump: Huh. What is accurate?

Germany: The numbers that we are showing are accurate.

Trump: No, about [name] . About early in the morning, Ryan. Where the woman took, you know, when the whole gang took the stuff from under the table, right? Do you know, do you know who those ballots, do you know who they were made out to, do you know who they were voting for?

Germany: No, not specifically.

Trump: Did you ever check?

Germany: We did what I described to you earlier —

Trump: No no no — did you ever check the ballots that were scanned by [name] , a known political operative, balloteer? Did ever check who those votes were for?

Germany: We looked into that situation that you described.

Trump: No, they were 100 percent for Biden. 100 percent. There wasn't a Trump vote in the whole group. Why don't you want to find this, Ryan? What's wrong with you? I heard your lawyer is very difficult, actually, but I'm sure you're a good lawyer. You have a nice last name.

But, but I'm just curious, why wouldn't, why do you keep fighting this thing? It just doesn't make sense. We're way over the 17,779, right? We're way over that number, and just if you took just [name] , we're over that number by five, five or six times when you multiply that times three.

And every single ballot went to Biden, and you didn't know that, but now you know it. So tell me, Brad, what are we going to do? We won the election, and it's not fair to take it away from us like this. And it's going to be very costly in many ways. And I think you have to say that you're going to reexamine it, and you can reexamine it, but reexamine it with people that want to find answers, not people that don't want to find answers. For instance, I'm hearing Ryan that he's probably, I'm sure a great lawyer and everything, but he's making statements about those ballots that he doesn't know. But he's making them with such — he did make them with surety. But now I think he's less sure because the answer is, they all went to Biden, and that alone wins us the election by a lot. You know, so.

Raffensperger: Mr. President, you have people that submit information, and we have our people that submit information. And then it comes before the court, and the court then has to make a determination. We have to stand by our numbers. We believe our numbers are right.

Trump: Why do you say that, though? I don't know. I mean, sure, we can play this game with the courts, but why do you say that? First of all, they don't even assign us a judge. They don't even assign us a judge. But why wouldn't you . . . Hey Brad, why wouldn't you want to check out [name] ? And why wouldn't you want to say, hey, if in fact, President Trump is right about that, then he wins the state of Georgia, just that one incident alone without going through hundreds of thousands of dropped ballots. You just say, you stick by, I mean I've been watching you, you know, you don't care about anything. "Your numbers are right." But your numbers aren't right. They're really wrong, and they're really wrong, Brad. And I know this phone call is going nowhere other than, other than ultimately, you know — Look, ultimately, I win, okay? Because you guys are so wrong. And you treated this. You treated the population of Georgia so badly. You, between you and your governor, who is down at 21, he was down 21 points. And like a schmuck, I endorsed him, and he got elected, but I will tell you, he is a disaster.

The people are so angry in Georgia, I can't imagine he's ever getting elected again, I'll tell you that much right now. But why wouldn't you want to find the right answer, Brad, instead of keep saying that the numbers are right? 'Cause those numbers are so wrong?

Mitchell: Mr. Secretary, Mr. President, one of the things that we have been, Alex can talk about this, we talked about it, and I don't know whether the information has been conveyed to your office, but I think what the president is saying, and what we've been trying to do is to say, look, the court is not acting on our petition. They haven't even assigned a judge. But the people of Georgia and the people of America have a right to know the answers. And you have data and records that we don't have access to.

And you can keep telling us and making public statement that you investigated this and nothing to see here. But we don't know about that. All we know is what you tell us. What I don't understand is why wouldn't it be in everyone's best interest to try to get to the bottom, compare the numbers, you know, if you say, because . . . to try to be able to get to the truth because we don't have any way of confirming what you're telling us. You tell us that you had

an investigation at the State Farm Arena. I don't have any report. I've never seen a report of investigation. I don't know that is. I've been pretty involved in this, and I don't know. And that's just one of 25 categories. And it doesn't even. And as I, as the president said, we haven't even gotten into the Dominion issue. That's not part of our case. It's not part of, we just didn't feel as though we had any to be able to develop —

Trump: No, we do have a way, but I don't want to get into it. We found a way . . . excuse me, but we don't need it because we're only down 11,000 votes, so we don't even need it. I personally think they're corrupt as hell. But we don't need that. All we have to do, Cleta, is find 11,000-plus votes. So we don't need that. I'm not looking to shake up the whole world. We won Georgia easily. We won it by hundreds of thousands of votes. But if you go by basic, simple numbers, we won it easily, easily. So we're not giving Dominion a pass on the record. We don't need Dominion because we have so many other votes that we don't need to prove it any more than we already have.

Hilbert: Mr. President and Cleta, this is Kurt Hilbert, if I might interject for a moment. Ryan, I would like to suggest that just four categories that have already been mentioned by the president that have actually hard numbers of 24,149 votes that were counted illegally. That in and of itself is sufficient to change the results or place the outcome in doubt. We would like to sit down with your office, and we can do it through purposes of compromise and just like this phone call, just to deal with that limited category of votes. And if you are able to establish that our numbers are not accurate, then fine. However, we believe that they are accurate. We've had now three to four separate experts looking at these numbers.

Trump: Certified accountants looked at them.

Hilbert: Correct. And this is just based on USPS data and your own secretary of state data. So that's what we would entreat and ask you to do, to sit down with us in a compromise and settlements proceeding and actually go through the registered voter IDs and the registrations. And if you can convince us that 24,149 is inaccurate, then fine. But we tend to believe that is, you know, obviously more than 11,779. That's sufficient to change the results entirely in and of itself. So what would you say to that, Mr. Germany?

Germany: I'm happy to get with our lawyers, and we'll set that up. That number is not accurate. And I think we can show you, for all the ones we've looked at, why it's not. And so if that would be helpful, I'm happy to get with our lawyers and set that up with you guys.

Trump: Well, let me ask you, Kurt, you think that is an accurate number. That was based on the information given to you by the secretary of state's department, right?

Hilbert: That is correct. That information is the minimum, most conservative data based upon the USPS data and the secretary of state's office data that has been made publicly available. We do not have the internal numbers from the secretary of state. Yet we have asked

for it six times. I sent a letter over to . . . several times requesting this information, and it's been rebuffed every single time. So it stands to reason that if the information is not forthcoming, there's something to hide. That's the problem that we have.

Germany: Well, that's not the case, sir. There are things that you guys are entitled to get. And there's things that under law, we are not allowed to give out.

Trump: Well, you have to. Well, under law, you're not allowed to give faulty election results, okay? You're not allowed to do that. And that's what you done. This is a faulty election result. And honestly, this should go very fast. You should meet tomorrow because you have a big election coming up, and because of what you've done to the president — you know, the people of Georgia know that this was a scam — and because of what you've done to the president, a lot of people aren't going out to vote. And a lot of Republicans are going to vote negative because they hate what you did to the president. Okay? They hate it. And they're going to vote. And you would be respected. Really respected, if this thing could be straightened out before the election. You have a big election coming up on Tuesday. And I think that it is really is important that you meet tomorrow and work out on these numbers. Because I know, Brad, that if you think we're right, I think you're going to say, and I'm not looking to blame anybody, I'm just saying, you know, and, you know, under new counts, and under new views, of the election results, we won the election. You know? It's very simple. We won the election. As the governors of major states and the surrounding states said, there is no way you lost Georgia. As the Georgia politicians say, there is no way you lost Georgia. Nobody. Everyone knows I won it by hundreds of thousands of votes. But I'll tell you it's going to have a big impact on Tuesday if you guys don't get this thing straightened out fast.

Meadows: Mr. President, this is Mark. It sounds like we've got two different sides agreeing that we can look at those areas, and I assume that we can do that within the next 24 to 48 hours, to go ahead and get that reconciled so that we can look at the two claims and making sure that we get the access to the secretary of state's data to either validate or invalidate the claims that have been made. Is that correct?

Germany: No, that's not what I said. I'm happy to have our lawyers sit down with Kurt and the lawyers on that side and explain to him, hey, here's, based on what we've looked at so far, here's how we know this is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong.

Meadows: So what you're saying, Ryan, let me let me make sure . . . so what you're saying is you really don't want to give access to the data. You just want to make another case on why the lawsuit is wrong?

Germany: I don't think we can give access to data that's protected by law. But we can sit down with them and say —

Trump: But you're allowed to have a phony election? You're allowed to have a phony election, right?

Germany: No, sir.

Trump: When are you going to do signature counts, when are you going to do signature verification on Fulton County, which you said you were going to do, and now all of a sudden, you're not doing it. When are you doing that?

Germany: We are going to do that. We've announced —

Hilbert: To get to this issue of the personal information and privacy issue, is it possible that the secretary of state could deputize the lawyers for the president so that we could access that information and private information without you having any kind of violation?

Trump: Well, I don't want to know who it is. You guys can do it very confidentially. You can sign a confidentiality agreement. That's okay. I don't need to know names. But on this stuff that we're talking about, we got all that information from the secretary of state.

Meadows: Yeah. So let me let me recommend, Ryan, if you and Kurt will get together, you know, when we get off of this phone call, if you could get together and work out a plan to address some of what we've got with your attorneys where we can we can actually look at the data. For example, Mr. Secretary, I can you say they were only two dead people who would vote. I can promise you there are more than that. And that may be what your investigation shows, but I can promise you there are more than that. But at the same time, I think it's important that we go ahead and move expeditiously to try to do this and resolve it as quickly as we possibly can. And if that's the good next step. Hopefully we can, we can finish this phone call and go ahead and agree that the two of you will get together immediately.

Trump: Well, why don't my lawyers show you where you got the information. It will show the secretary of state, and you don't even have to look at any names. We don't want names. We don't care. But we got that information from you. And Stacey Abrams is laughing about you. She's going around saying these guys are dumber than a rock. What she's done to this party is unbelievable, I tell you. And I only ran against her once. And that was with a guy named Brian Kemp, and I beat her. And if I didn't run, Brian wouldn't have had even a shot, either in the general or in the primary. He was dead, dead as a doornail. He never thought he had a shot at either one of them. What a schmuck I was. But that's the way it is. That's the way it is. I would like you . . . for the attorneys . . . I'd like you to perhaps meet with Ryan, ideally tomorrow, because I think we should come to a resolution of this before the election. Otherwise you're going to have people just not voting. They don't want to vote. They hate the state, they hate the governor, and they hate the secretary of state. I will tell you that right now. The only people that like you are people that will never vote for you. You know that, Brad, right? They like you, you know, they like you. They can't believe what they found. They want more people like you. So, look, can you get together tomorrow? And, Brad, we just want the truth. It's simple.

And everyone's going to look very good if the truth comes out. It's okay. It takes a little while, but let the truth come out. And the real truth is, I won by 400,000 votes. At least. That's the real truth. But we don't need 400,000 votes. We need less than 2,000 votes. And are you guys able to meet tomorrow, Ryan?

Germany: I'll get with Chris, the lawyer who's representing us in the case, and see when he can get together with Kurt.

Raffensperger: Ryan will be in touch with the other attorney on this call, Mr. Meadows. Thank you, President Trump, for your time.

Trump: Okay, thank you, Brad. Thank you, Ryan. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Thank you very much. Bye.

An earlier version of the full audio of Trump's call inadvertently left in a reference to an individual about whom he has made unsubstantiated claims. It has since been updated.

This transcript has been updated to clarify crosstalk in which Trump refers to a "never-Trumper U.S. attorney."

‘I just want to find 11,780 votes’: In extraordinary hour-long call, Trump pressures Georgia secretary of state to recalculate the vote in his favor

washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-raffensperger-call-georgia-vote/2021/01/03/d45acb92-4dc4-11eb-bda4-615aaefd0555_story.html

By Amy Gardner January 3, 2021



President Trump urged fellow Republican Brad Raffensperger, the Georgia secretary of state, to “find” enough votes to overturn his defeat in an extraordinary one-hour phone call Saturday that legal scholars described as a flagrant abuse of power and a potential criminal act.

The Washington Post obtained a recording of the conversation in which Trump alternately berated Raffensperger, tried to flatter him, begged him to act and threatened him with vague criminal consequences if the secretary of state refused to pursue his false claims, at one point warning that Raffensperger was taking “a big risk.”

Throughout the call, Raffensperger and his office's general counsel rejected Trump's assertions, explaining that the president is relying on debunked conspiracy theories and that President-elect Joe Biden's 11,779-vote victory in Georgia was fair and accurate.

Trump dismissed their arguments.

"The people of Georgia are angry, the people of the country are angry," he said. "And there's nothing wrong with saying, you know, that you've recalculated."

Raffensperger responded: "Well, Mr. President, the challenge that you have is, the data you have is wrong."

At another point, Trump said: "So look. All I want to do is this. I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have. Because we won the state."

He later added: "So what are we going to do here, folks? I only need 11,000 votes. Fellas, I need 11,000 votes. Give me a break."

The rambling and at times incoherent conversation offered a remarkable glimpse of how consumed and desperate the president remains about his loss, unwilling or unable to let the matter go and still asserting he can reverse the results in enough battleground states to remain in office.

"There's no way I lost Georgia," Trump said, a phrase he repeated again and again on the call. "There's no way. We won by hundreds of thousands of votes."

Several of his allies were on the line as he spoke, including White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and conservative lawyer Cleta Mitchell, a prominent GOP attorney whose involvement with Trump's efforts had not been previously known.

In a statement, Mitchell said Raffensperger's office "has made many statements over the past two months that are simply not correct and everyone involved with the efforts on behalf of the President's election challenge has said the same thing: show us your records on which you rely to make these statements that our numbers are wrong."

The White House, the Trump campaign and Meadows did not respond to a request for comment.

Raffensperger's office declined to comment.

On Sunday, Trump tweeted that he had spoken to Raffensperger, saying the secretary of state was "unwilling, or unable, to answer questions such as the 'ballots under table' scam, ballot destruction, out of state 'voters', dead voters, and more. He has no clue!"

Raffensperger responded with his own tweet: "Respectfully, President Trump: What you're saying is not true."

The details of the call drew demands from top Democrats for criminal investigations. Campaigning in Georgia, Vice President-elect Kamala D. Harris called Trump's conversation a "baldfaced, bold abuse of power by the president of the United States." Biden's top campaign lawyer, Bob Bauer, said the recording "captures the whole, disgraceful story about Donald Trump's assault on American democracy."

Republicans, however, were largely silent. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.), when asked about the call while campaigning in Georgia on Sunday for the two GOP senators who face a runoff Tuesday, dodged the question completely.

Trump's pressure campaign on Raffensperger is the latest example of his attempt to subvert the outcome of the Nov. 3 election through personal outreach to state Republican officials. He previously invited Michigan Republican state leaders to the White House, pressured Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp (R) in a call to try to replace that state's electors and asked the speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to help reverse his loss in that state.

His call to Raffensperger came as scores of Republicans have pledged to challenge the electoral college's vote for Biden when Congress convenes for a joint session on Wednesday. Republicans do not have the votes to successfully thwart Biden's victory, but Trump has urged supporters to travel to Washington to protest the outcome, and state and federal officials are already bracing for clashes outside the Capitol.

During their conversation, Trump issued a vague threat to both Raffensperger and Ryan Germany, the secretary of state's general counsel, suggesting that if they don't find that thousands of ballots in Fulton County have been illegally destroyed to block investigators — an allegation for which there is no evidence — they would be subject to criminal liability.

"That's a criminal offense," he said. "And you can't let that happen. That's a big risk to you and to Ryan, your lawyer."

Trump also told Raffensperger that failure to act by Tuesday would jeopardize the political fortunes of David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler, Georgia's two Republican senators whose fate in that day's runoff elections will determine control of the U.S. Senate.

Trump said he plans to talk about the alleged fraud Monday, when he is scheduled to lead an election eve rally in Dalton, Ga. — a message that could further muddle the efforts of Republicans to draw their voters out.

"You have a big election coming up, and because of what you've done to the president — you know, the people of Georgia know that this was a scam," Trump said. "Because of what you've done to the president, a lot of people aren't going out to vote, and a lot of Republicans are going to vote negative because they hate what you did to the president. Okay? They hate it. And they're going to vote. And you would be respected, really respected, if this can be straightened out before the election."

Trump's conversation with Raffensperger echoed his effort to persuade the Ukrainian president to investigate Biden on a call that led to his impeachment, and once again put him in legally questionable territory, legal scholars said. By exhorting the secretary of state to "find" votes and to deploy investigators who "want to find answers," the president appeared to be encouraging him to doctor the election outcome in Georgia, which could violate both state and federal law.

Additionally, Trump's apparent threat of criminal consequences if Raffensperger failed to act could be seen as an attempt at extortion and a suggestion that he might deploy the Justice Department to launch an investigation, they said.

"The president is either knowingly attempting to coerce state officials into corrupting the integrity of the election or is so deluded that he believes what he's saying," said Richard H. Pildes, a constitutional law professor at New York University, who noted that Trump's actions may have violated several federal statutes.

But Pildes said Trump's clearer transgression is a moral one, and he emphasized that focusing on whether he committed a crime could deflect attention from the "simple, stark, horrific fact that we have a president trying to use the powers of his office to pressure state officials into committing election fraud to keep him in office."

Prosecutors would likely exercise discretion in considering a case against an outgoing president, experts said. Edward B. Foley, a law professor at Ohio State University, said the legal questions are murky, and it could be difficult to prove that Trump knew he was encouraging illegal behavior. But Foley also emphasized that the call was "inappropriate and contemptible" and should prompt outrage.

"He was already tripping the emergency meter," Foley said. "So we were at 12 on a scale of 1 to 10, and now we're at 15."

Throughout the call, Trump detailed an exhaustive list of disinformation and conspiracy theories to support his position. He claimed without evidence that he had won Georgia by at least a half-million votes. He floated a barrage of assertions that have been investigated and disproved: that thousands of dead people voted; that an Atlanta election worker scanned 18,000 forged ballots three times each and "100 percent" were for Biden; that thousands more voters living out of state came back to Georgia illegally just to vote in the election.

"So tell me, Brad, what are we going to do? We won the election, and it's not fair to take it away from us like this," Trump said. "And it's going to be very costly in many ways. And I think you have to say that you're going to reexamine it, and you can reexamine it, but reexamine it with people that want to find answers, not people who don't want to find answers."

Trump did most of the talking. He was angry and impatient, calling Raffensperger a "child," and said law enforcement officials were "either dishonest or incompetent" for not finding widespread ballot fraud in Atlanta. He twice called himself a "schmuck" for endorsing Kemp, whom Trump holds in particular contempt for not embracing his claims.

"I can't imagine he's ever getting elected again, I'll tell you that much right now," he said of the governor.

He also took aim at Kemp's 2018 opponent, Democrat Stacey Abrams, trying to shame Raffensperger with the idea that his refusal to embrace fraud has helped her and Democrats generally. "Stacey Abrams is laughing about you," he said. "She's going around saying, 'These guys are dumber than a rock.' What she's done to this party is unbelievable, I tell you."

The secretary of state repeatedly sought to correct Trump, saying at one point, "Mr. President, the problem you have with social media, they — people can say anything."

"Oh this isn't social media," Trump retorted. "This is Trump media. It's not social media. It's really not. It's not social media. I don't care about social media. I couldn't care less."

At another point, Trump claimed that votes were scanned three times: "Brad, why did they put the votes in three times? You know, they put 'em in three times."

Raffensperger responded: "Mr. President, they did not. We did an audit of that, and we proved conclusively that they were not scanned three times."

Trump sounded at turns confused and meandering. At one point, he referred to Kemp as "George." He tossed out several different figures for Biden's margin of victory in Georgia and referred to the Senate runoff, which is Tuesday, as happening "tomorrow" and "Monday."

His desperation was perhaps most pronounced during an exchange with Germany, Raffensperger's general counsel, in which he openly begged for validation.

Trump: "Do you think it's possible that they shredded ballots in Fulton County? Because that's what the rumor is. And also that Dominion took out machines. That Dominion is really moving fast to get rid of their, uh, machinery. Do you know anything about that? Because that's illegal, right?"

Germany responded: "No, Dominion has not moved any machinery out of Fulton County."

Trump: "But have they moved the inner parts of the machines and replaced them with other parts?"

Germany: "No."

Trump: "Are you sure, Ryan?"

Germany: "I'm sure. I'm sure, Mr. President."

It was clear from the call that Trump has surrounded himself with aides who have fed his false perceptions that the election was stolen. When he claimed that more than 5,000 ballots were cast in Georgia in the name of dead people, Raffensperger responded forcefully: "The actual number was two. Two. Two people that were dead that voted."

But later, Meadows said, "I can promise you there are more than that."

Another Trump lawyer on the call, Kurt Hilbert, accused Raffensperger's office of refusing to turn over data to assess evidence of fraud, and he claimed awareness of at least 24,000 illegally cast ballots that would flip the result to Trump.

"It stands to reason that if the information is not forthcoming, there's something to hide," Hilbert said. "That's the problem that we have."

Reached by phone Sunday, Hilbert declined to comment.

For her part, Mitchell contradicted Trump on several occasions on the call, saying, "Well, I don't know about that," when the president alleged that a Fulton County election worker had triple-counted 18,000 ballots for Biden. She claimed that the extent of the fraud is unclear because Raffensperger's office has not shared all the data Trump's lawyers have sought.

"We never had the records that you have," she said. Germany noted that the office is barred under law from sharing certain voter information.

In the end, Trump asked Germany to sit down with one of his attorneys to go over the allegations. Germany agreed.

Yet Trump also recognized that he was failing to persuade Raffensperger or Germany of anything, saying toward the end, "I know this phone call is going nowhere."

"Why don't you want to find this, Ryan?" he asked of Germany. "What's wrong with you? I heard your lawyer is very difficult, actually, but I'm sure you're a good lawyer. You have a nice last name."

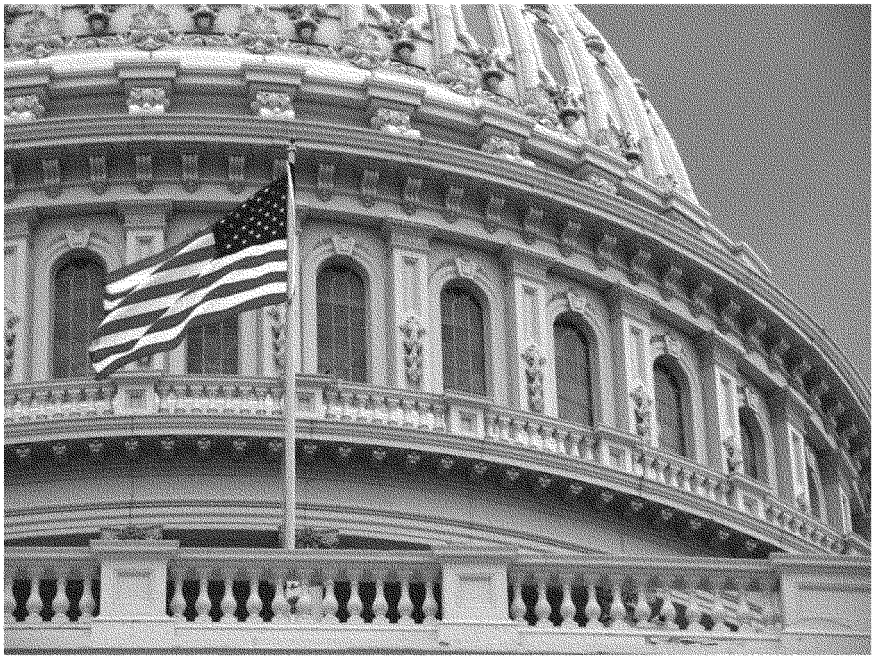
But he continued to make his case in repetitive fashion, until finally, after roughly an hour, Raffensperger put an end to the conversation: "Thank you, President Trump, for your time."

Alice Crites contributed to this report.

NEWS & POLITICS

MAGA Geniuses Plot Takeover of US Capitol

WRITTEN BY ANDREW BEAUJON | PUBLISHED ON **JANUARY 5, 2021**



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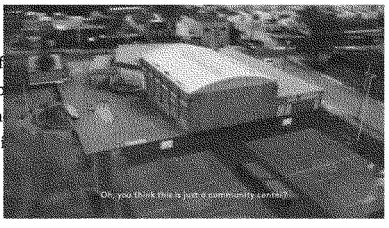

TheDonald.win, an online forum for fans of President Trump, is on f
for pro-Trump rallies. Since the rallies coincide with Congress's exp
Trump, a subset of TheDonald.win's posters have discussed ways th
make citizens' arrests of lawmakers who hold old-fashioned views li

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Eva Malecki, a spokesperson for the US Capitol Police, declined to comment on the MAGA fans' thought experiments but tells *Washingtonian* that "While we do not discuss the means, methods, or specific resources used to carry out our protective responsibilities, the United States Capitol Police has comprehensive security plans in place and we continuously monitor and assess new and emerging threats, with the overall goal of keeping those within the Capitol Complex safe and secure."

Some of TheDonald.win's commenters nonetheless think they've found a way in that the cops may have forgotten: The Capitol complex's system of pedestrian tunnels, originally built to protect delicate lawmakers from Washington's weather. In one discussion titled "If we occupy the capitol building, there will be no vote," for instance, commenters bat around the idea while taking into consideration doors that are "built like castle walls," barricades, and law enforcement.

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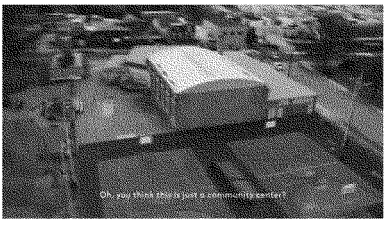
Tunnels are a big topic of discussion in other posts, like this one that fantasizes about "Every corrupt member of congress locked in one room and surrounded by real Americans." (Pessimism, alas, surfaces that members of Congress will instead "vote via Skype from the luxury of their villas with private security guarding their families like the coward commie scum they are.") Another shares an old-timey map of the tunnels that purports to show the complex from below. Sample comment: "It's the worst map I've ever seen."

One poster shared the Architect of the Capitol's web page about the Capitol subway, though someone replied that its URL–aoc.gov–was "triggering me." Another suggests the perfect music to accompany their madcap scheme: Inner Circle's "Bad Boys," also known as the theme to *Cops*. There's definitely no better way to indicate that you are on the side of law and order.



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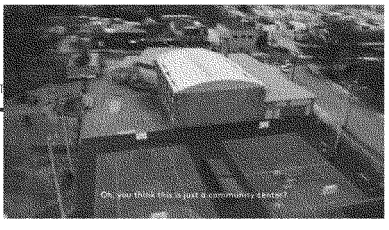

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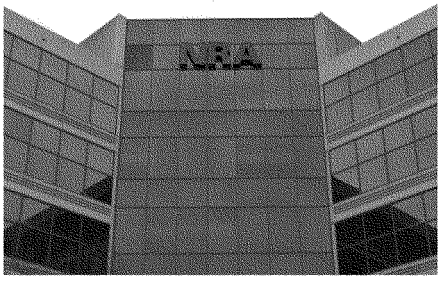

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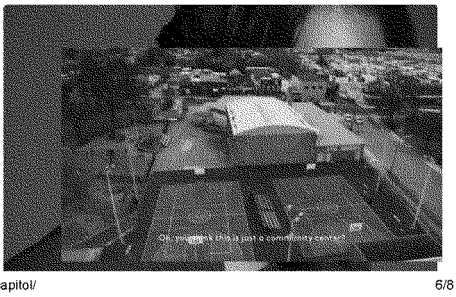



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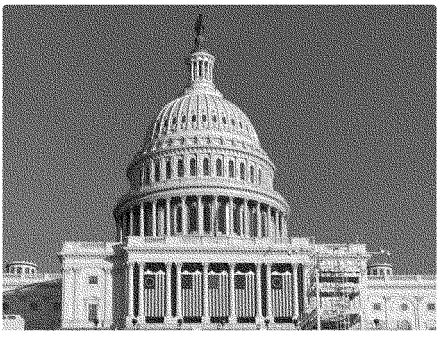

Looks Like There's Only One Pro-Trump Rally Officially Planned for DC During Inauguration



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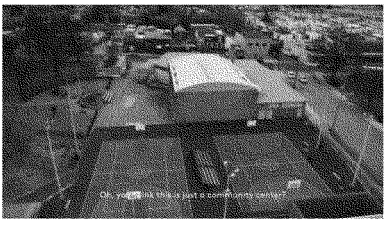

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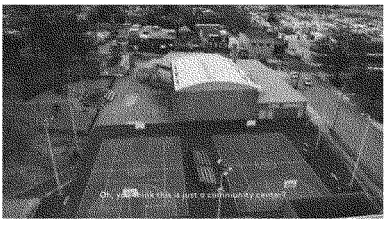
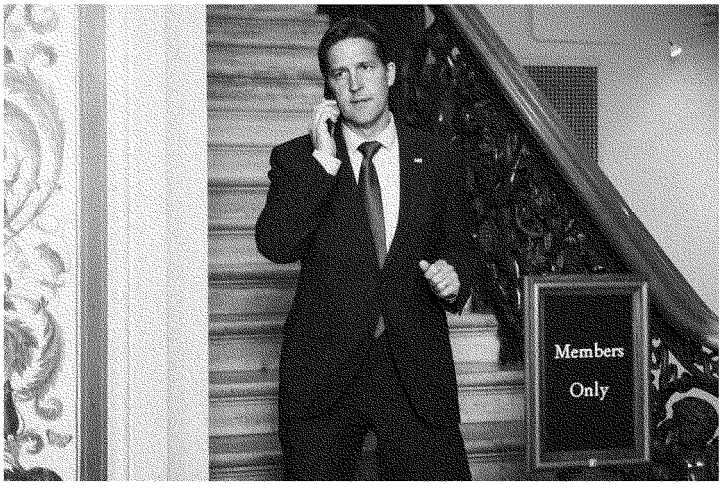


Republican senator: White House aides say Trump was "delighted" as Capitol was stormed

vox.com/2021/1/8/22220840/sasse-trump-capitol-storming-impeachment

Andrew Prokop January 8, 2021



Sen. Ben Sasse became the first Republican senator to say that he would "consider" voting to remove President Trump from office.
Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call via Getty Images

How did President Donald Trump react to the chaotic scene in which his supporters stormed the Capitol as Congress was preparing to formally approve President-elect Joe Biden's win — a scene that eventually left five people dead?

One Republican senator who says he's been in touch with senior White House aides about the matter claims the president was "delighted."

"I don't have any idea what was in his heart about what he wanted to happen once they were in the Capitol, but he wanted there to be chaos," Sen. Ben Sasse (R-NE) said, during an interview with conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt Friday morning.

"And I'm sure you've also had conversations with other senior White House officials, as I have," Sasse continued. "As this was unfolding on television, Donald Trump was walking around the White House confused about why other people on his team weren't as excited as he was as you had rioters pushing against Capitol Police trying to get into the building."

Sasse added: "He was delighted."

This account generally coincides with other reporting, sourced to anonymous White House aides, about how Trump responded to his supporters' actions, and why he took so long to tell them to "go home." (Though an adviser who spoke to New York magazine's Olivia Nuzzi said that Trump disliked the optics of the mob, viewing them as "low class.")

In a separate interview on CBS Friday, Sasse became the first Republican senator to say that he would "consider" voting to remove President Trump from office if House Democrats impeached him — though he didn't fully commit to doing so. (House Democrats seem increasingly likely to impeach Trump for a second time and may do so next week.)

> Impeachment, it's not just Democrats.
>
> Sen. Ben Sasse (R-NE) says if the House pursues impeachment he will "definitely consider whatever articles they might move because I believe the president has disregarded his oath of office ... What he did was wicked." pic.twitter.com/PT3U0GnSwh
>
> — The Recount (@therecount) January 8, 2021

When Hewitt asked about impeachment, Sasse said there was a very important issue he wanted to get to the bottom of: why the National Guard wasn't deployed more quickly to help restore order.

"That's what I've been working on last night and this morning. I want to understand more about why the National Guard wasn't deployed when there had been clear calls for it, and then why that delay happened. So there are more things that I need to understand before I get to a conclusory judgment about that," Sasse said. "But I think that the question of, 'Was the president derelict in his duty,' that's not an open question. He was."

Sasse, who criticized Trump frequently during the 2016 campaign, stayed mostly quiet about the criticisms he had for most of Trump's presidency. But in recent months he's scathingly rebutted Trump's efforts to overturn the results of the election, calling them a "loaded gun" pointed "at the heart of legitimate self-government." Those words proved prophetic as Trump supporters egged on by the president's lies and conspiracy theories forced their way into the Capitol Wednesday.

You can read a transcript of Sasse's full interview with Hewitt at this link.

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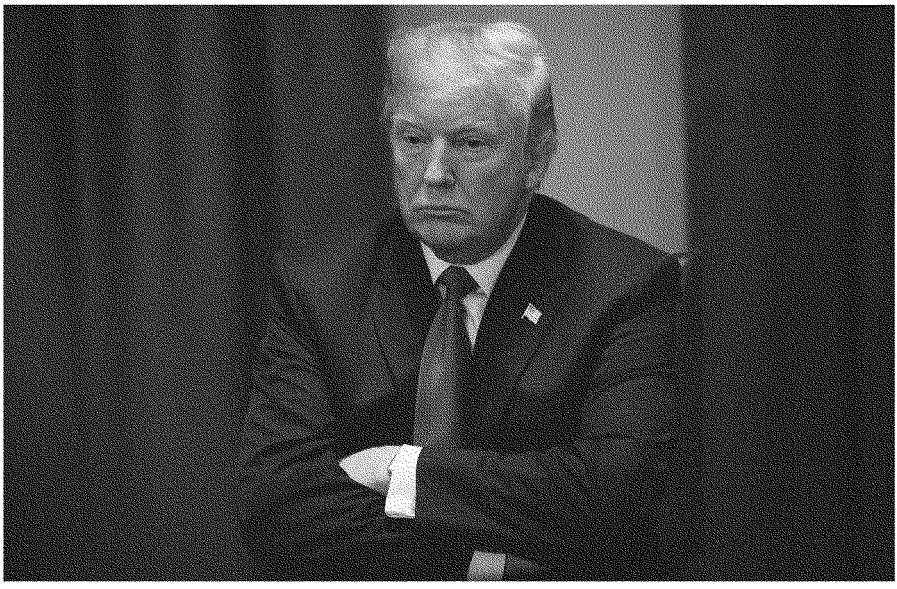
Facebook will block Trump from posting at least for the remainder of his term

cnbc.com/2021/01/07/facebook-will-block-trump-from-posting-for-the-remainder-of-his-term.html

January 7, 2021



Key Points

- Facebook and Instagram are blocking President Donald Trump's accounts "indefinitely and for at least the next two weeks until the peaceful transition of power is complete," CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced Thursday.
- Shopify also closed e-commerce stores on its site that were affiliated with Trump.
- Facebook, Twitter and YouTube began taking steps on Wednesday to limit Trump's posts on their platforms after he continued to make false claims about the results of the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

VIDEO3:4403:44

Facebook and Instagram ban Trump indefinitely after supporters storm U.S. Capitol

Squawk on the Street

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg on Thursday said the company would block President Donald Trump from posting to his Facebook and Instagram accounts for an indefinite amount of time and at least until President-elect Joe Biden assumes the Oval Office.

"We believe the risks of allowing the President to continue to use our service during this period are simply too great," Zuckerberg wrote in a post on his Facebook page. "Therefore, we are extending the block we have placed on his Facebook and Instagram accounts indefinitely and for at least the next two weeks until the peaceful transition of power is complete."

The suspension represents Facebook's most aggressive action yet against Trump during his four-year term. Calls had been mounting for Twitter and other social media platforms to shut down the president's account or take other extreme action.

Facebook, Twitter, Snap and Google's YouTube began taking steps on Wednesday to limit Trump's posts on their platforms after he continued to make false claims about the results of the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

Facebook on Wednesday had said it would lock Trump's account for 24 hours, preventing him from posting on the service. Facebook-owned Instagram also locked the president's account on the service.

SEE ALSO: Trump got a free pass from Twitter and Facebook, and the result was a storming of the Capitol

Twitter locked Trump's account on Wednesday evening for 12 hours and warned that it could suspend him permanently if he continued to breach the company's civic integrity policy. A spokesperson for Twitter told CNBC on Thursday that Trump has now removed the offending tweets, "and the 12-hour clock is on." The lock could be removed around 3 p.m. ET.

Twitter declined to comment on whether it would also move to block Trump from posting to his account.

E-commerce platform Shopify on Thursday also closed websites associated with Trump that it said violated internal policies. The Trump Organization's official retail site, Trumpstore.com, was among the sites taken offline.

Shopify told CNBC in a statement: "Shopify does not tolerate actions that incite violence. Based on recent events, we have determined that the actions by President Donald J. Trump violate our Acceptable Use Policy, which prohibits promotion or support of organizations, platforms or people that threaten or condone violence to further a cause. As a result, we have terminated stores affiliated with President Trump."

The White House and the Trump Organization didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Here's the full post from Zuckerberg, which was published to his personal Facebook account:

The shocking events of the last 24 hours clearly demonstrate that President Donald Trump intends to use his remaining time in office to undermine the peaceful and lawful transition of power to his elected successor, Joe Biden.

His decision to use his platform to condone rather than condemn the actions of his supporters at the Capitol building has rightly disturbed people in the US and around the world. We removed these statements yesterday because we judged that their effect -- and likely their intent -- would be to provoke further violence.

Following the certification of the election results by Congress, the priority for the whole country must now be to ensure that the remaining 13 days and the days after inauguration pass peacefully and in accordance with established democratic norms.

Over the last several years, we have allowed President Trump to use our platform consistent with our own rules, at times removing content or labeling his posts when they violate our policies. We did this because we believe that the public has a right to the broadest possible access to political speech, even controversial speech. But the current context is now fundamentally different, involving use of our platform to incite violent insurrection against a democratically elected government.

We believe the risks of allowing the President to continue to use our service during this period are simply too great. Therefore, we are extending the block we have placed on his Facebook and Instagram accounts indefinitely and for at least the next two weeks until the peaceful transition of power is complete.

-- CNBC's Salvador Rodriguez contributed to this report.

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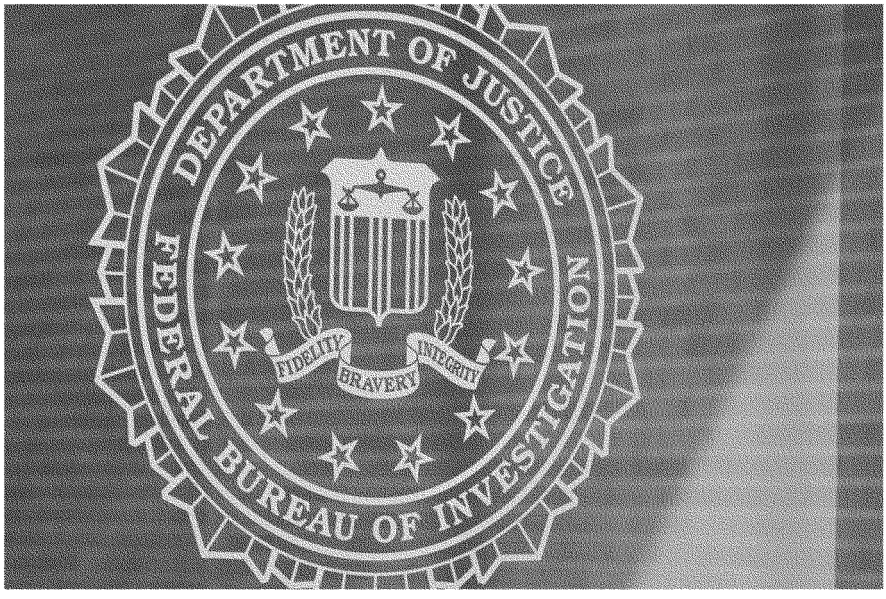
LEGAL

FBI warns of plans for nationwide armed protests next week

An internal FBI bulletin warned that, as of Sunday, the nationwide protests may start later this week and extend through Biden's Jan. 20 inauguration.



The FBI logo. | Jessica McGowan/Getty Images

By ASSOCIATED PRESS
01/11/2021 03:06 PM EST

The FBI is warning of plans for armed protests at all 50 state capitals and in Washington in the days leading up to President-election Joe Biden's inauguration, stoking fears of more bloodshed after last week's deadly siege at the U.S. Capitol.

An internal FBI bulletin warned that, as of Sunday, the nationwide protests may start later this week and extend through Biden's Jan. 20 inauguration, according to two law enforcement officials who read details of the memo to The Associated Press. Investigators believe some of the people are members of some extremist groups, the officials said. The bulletin was first reported by ABC.

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"Armed protests are being planned at all 50 state capitols from 16 January through at least 20 January, and at the U.S. Capitol from 17 January through 20 January," the bulletin said, according to one official. The officials were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The FBI issued at least one other bulletin — they go out to law enforcement nationwide on the topic — before the riots last week. On Dec. 29, it warned of the potential for armed demonstrators targeting legislatures, the second official said.

Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, told reporters on Monday that the Guard is also looking at any issues across the country

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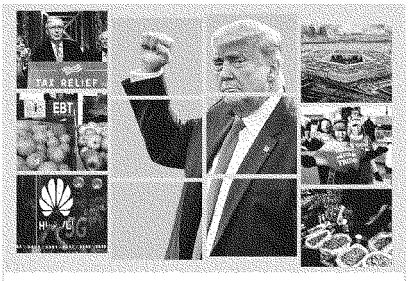

2 THE BIG IDEA

30 Things Donald Trump Did as President You Might Have Missed

3

"We're keeping a look across the entire country to make sure that we're monitoring, and that our Guards in every state are in close coordination with their local law enforcement agencies to provide any support requested."

The riots followed weeks of online calls for violence in Washington in the waning days of Donald Trump's presidency.

A tweet in which Trump promised that last Wednesday's event "will be wild" fueled a "month-long frenzy of incitements, strategizing, and embrace of violence against lawmakers," according to a research group that tracks online extremism activity, In a report issued Saturday, the SITE Intelligence Group also warns that the Capitol attack has emboldened Trump-supporting extremists.

"No matter how all this plays out, its only the beginning," posted a user on TheDonald message board, according to the report.

FILED UNDER: JOE BIDEN, JOE BIDEN 2020, FBI, JAN. 6 CAPITOL RIOT

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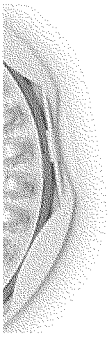

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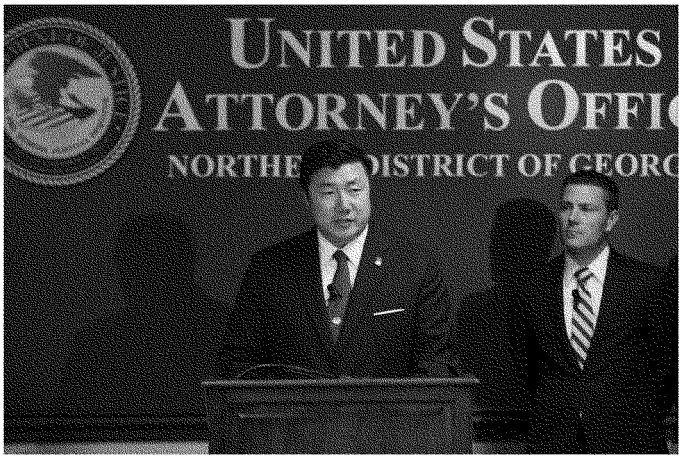

U.S. Attorney Byung J. Pak spoke in Atlanta in 2019.

Photo: Bob Andres/Atlanta Journal-Constitution/Associated Press

White House officials pushed Atlanta's top federal prosecutor to resign before Georgia's U.S. Senate runoffs because President Trump was upset he wasn't doing enough to investigate the president's unproven claims of election fraud, people familiar with the matter said.

A senior Justice Department official, at the behest of the White House, called the Trump-appointed U.S. Attorney Byung J. Pak late on the night of Jan. 3. In that call the official said Mr. Trump was furious there was no investigation related to election fraud and that the president wanted to fire Mr. Pak, the people said.

Mr. Pak resigned abruptly on Monday—the day before the runoffs—saying in an early morning email to colleagues that his departure was due to "unforeseen circumstances."

Mr. Pak, who had a job lined up in the private sector, planned to leave by the end of the administration and had drafted a resignation letter, people familiar with his plans said.

Mr. Pak on Jan. 3 considered leaving early after the public release of a call from the day before between Mr. Trump and Georgia's secretary of state Brad Raffensperger in which the president pushed the official to overturn the November election results, one person said.

When Mr. Pak communicated that on the Sunday call, the White House indicated he should leave immediately, the person said.

Mr. Trump then called the prosecutor he wanted to replace Mr. Pak, Savannah's U.S. Attorney Bobby Christine, and told him he was putting him in the job, the person said. In doing so, Mr. Trump bypassed the traditional process in which the office's No. 2 official would fill the vacancy, as well as longstanding protocol that discourages a president from directly contacting Justice Department officials.

It put Mr. Christine in the unusual position of serving as top prosecutor in two districts. Atlanta falls in the Northern District of Georgia, and there is a separate Middle District in the state.

Mr. Christine declined to comment.

The pressure on Mr. Pak was part of Mr. Trump's weekslong push to try to alter presidential election results favoring President-elect Joe Biden, which included his win in Georgia. Mr. Trump this week, following the U.S. Capitol riot, said he would leave office on Jan. 20 when Mr. Biden is inaugurated.

Senior Justice Department officials including recently departed Attorney General William Barr have said the Justice Department hadn't found evidence of widespread voter fraud that could reverse Mr. Biden's victory, including claims of fraud, ballot destruction and voting-machine manipulation.

The officials have resisted overtures from Mr. Trump and his allies since November to pursue unsubstantiated allegations of election fraud, and no Justice Department officials supported Mr. Pak's dismissal, the people said.

Dozens of state and federal court decisions also have rejected efforts by Mr. Trump and his supporters to challenge election results. And Congress formally certified Mr. Biden's Electoral College victory on Thursday, after a violent pro-Trump mob stormed the Capitol and forced a delay in the process.

The White House and the Justice Department didn't respond to requests for comment.

Mr. Pak's resignation came one day after the public release of the audio of the Jan. 2 call to Georgia's secretary of state. Mr. Trump told Mr. Raffensperger in the roughly hourlong call that the Georgia Republican could face legal action and said he should find nearly 12,000 votes of 5 million cast to reverse Mr. Biden's victory in the state.

Mr. Raffensperger rejected pressure to further investigate an election, telling the president, "The challenge that you have is that the data you have is wrong."

The president also complained on the call that Mr. Pak was a "Never Trumper."

Georgia conducted recounts that didn't change the outcome. Mr. Raffensperger and other Georgia officials investigated various allegations and found no evidence of widespread fraud.

Mr. Christine, who was appointed by Mr. Trump to the Savannah post in 2017, assumed his additional role by a written order of the president on Jan. 4, the same day as Mr. Pak's resignation. Mr. Christine brought with him two lawyers from his Savannah office who were already monitoring for possible election irregularities, people familiar with the matter said.

Spokespeople for Mr. Christine and the U.S. attorney's office in Atlanta declined to comment.

Mr. Trump's call to Mr. Raffensperger came as the president and his supporters since November had pushed to overturn the election results in Georgia, including through public attacks on the state's Republican governor and other officials by Mr. Trump, his lawyer Rudy Giuliani and others.

Mr. Trump personally called a staffer in the Georgia secretary of state's office, demanding that it produce proof of election fraud, an official at that office said on Saturday. The president made that call in December before separate outreach to Mr. Raffensperger.

The Georgia secretary of state's office official on Saturday said the White House called officials and staff at the office for weeks demanding proof of election fraud—even before the Jan. 2 call to Mr. Raffensperger.

"They were desperately trying to find evidence for lawsuits that were about to be thrown out of court," the official said. "They kept telling us that, 'You need to give us the evidence,' and the truth is there isn't any evidence to give."

The Georgia official said staffers were worried when they heard Mr. Pak had resigned, fearing the White House would put in people to investigate those who remained. "Retaliation was very much a concern," the official said.

The Washington Post earlier Saturday reported the phone call between Mr. Trump and the secretary of state staffer.

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Federal Bureau of Investigation agents in Atlanta also found the allegations of election fraud in the state lacking and didn't see a need to pursue them, people familiar with the matter said. The FBI's Atlanta office declined to comment.

On the call with Mr. Raffensperger, Ryan Germany, the secretary of state's general counsel, told the president: "What we are seeing is not at all what you are describing."

At one point on the weekend call with Mr. Raffensperger, in which Mr. Trump repeatedly complained about supposed irregularities in Fulton County, which includes most of Atlanta, Mr. Trump apparently referred to Mr. Pak, saying: "I mean, you have your Never Trumper U.S. attorney there."

Colleagues and associates of Mr. Pak said they had viewed Mr. Pak as a proud and early supporter of Mr. Trump, who nominated him to his post in July 2017. Mr. Pak thanked the president by name at his swearing-in ceremony after the Senate confirmed him to the post two months later, and again in the brief statement he released on his resignation. "I am grateful to President Trump and the United States Senate for the opportunity to serve, and to Attorneys General [Jeff] Sessions and [William] Barr for their leadership of the department," Mr. Pak said.

—Rebecca Ballhaus contributed to this article.

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Appeared in the January 11, 2021, print edition as 'White House Pressed for A U.S. Attorney to Quit.'

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Six hours of paralysis: Inside Trump's failure to act after a mob stormed the Capitol

By **Ashley Parker**, **Josh Dawsey** and **Philip Rucker**

Jan. 11, 2021 at 11:21 p.m. EST

Hiding from the rioters in a secret location away from the Capitol, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) appealed to Jared Kushner, President Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser. Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) phoned Ivanka Trump, the president's daughter.

And Kellyanne Conway, a longtime Trump confidante and former White House senior adviser, called an aide who she knew was standing at the president's side.

But as senators and House members trapped inside the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday begged for immediate help during the siege, they struggled to get through to the president, who — safely ensconced in the West Wing — was too busy watching fiery TV images of the crisis unfolding around them to act or even bother to hear their pleas.

"He was hard to reach, and you know why? Because it was live TV," said one close Trump adviser. "If it's TiVo, he just hits pause and takes the calls. If it's live TV, he watches it, and he was just watching it all unfold."

Even as he did so, Trump did not move to act. And the message from those around him — that he needed to call off the angry mob he had egged on just hours earlier, or lives could be lost — was one to which he was not initially receptive.

"It took him awhile to appreciate the gravity of the situation," Graham said in an interview. "The president saw these people as allies in his journey and sympathetic to the idea that the election was stolen."

Trump ultimately — and begrudgingly — urged his supporters to "go home in peace." But the six hours between when the Capitol was breached shortly before 2 p.m. Wednesday afternoon and when it was finally declared secure around 8 p.m. that evening reveal a president paralyzed — more passive viewer than resolute leader, repeatedly failing to perform even the basic duties of his job.

The man who vowed to be a president of law and order failed to enforce the law or restore order. The man who has always seen himself as the protector of uniformed police sat idly by as Capitol Police officers were outnumbered, outmaneuvered, trampled on — and in one case, killed. And the man who had long craved the power of the presidency abdicated many of the responsibilities of the commander in chief.

The episode in which Trump supporters rose up against their own government, leaving five people dead, will be central to any impeachment proceedings, critical to federal prosecutors considering incitement charges against him or his family, and a dark cornerstone of his presidential legacy.

This portrait of the president as the Capitol was under attack on Jan. 6 is the result of interviews with 15 Trump

advisers, members of Congress, GOP officials and other Trump confidants, many of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity to share candid details.

'Fight for Trump'

The day began ominously, with a "Save America March" on the Ellipse devoted to perpetuating Trump's baseless claims that somehow the 2020 election was stolen from him.

Before the president's remarks around noon, several of his family members addressed the crowd with speeches that all shared a central theme: Fight. Eric Trump, one of the president's sons, told the crowd that lawmakers needed to "show some fight" and "stand up," before urging the angry mass to "march on the Capitol today." Donald Trump Jr., another of the president's sons, exhorted all "red-blooded, patriotic Americans" to "fight for Trump."

Backstage, as the president prepared to speak, Laura Branigan's hit "Gloria" was blared to rev up the crowd, and Trump Jr., in a video he recorded for social media, called the rallygoers "awesome patriots that are sick of the bull----." His girlfriend, Kimberly Guilfoyle, danced to the song and, clenching her right fist, urged people to "fight."

The president, too, ended his speech with an exhortation, urging the crowd to give Republicans "the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country."

"So let's walk down Pennsylvania Avenue," he concluded.

Trump, however, did not join the angry crowd surging toward the Capitol. Instead, he returned to the White House, where at 2:24 p.m. he tapped out a furious tweet railing against Vice President Pence, who in a letter earlier in the day had made clear that he planned to fulfill his constitutional duties and certify President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala D. Harris as the winners of the 2020 electoral college vote.

"Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify," he wrote. "USA demands the truth!"

By then, West Wing staffers monitoring initial videos of the protesters on TV and social media were already worried that the situation was escalating and felt that Trump's tweet attacking Pence was unhelpful.

Press officials had begun discussing a statement from Trump around 2 p.m., when protesters first breached the Capitol, an official familiar with the discussions said. But they were not authorized to speak on behalf of the president and could only take the matter to Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, this person said, adding that "the most infuriating part" of the day was how long it took before Trump finally spoke out.

Around the same time, Trump Jr. headed to the airport for a shuttle flight home to New York. As he waited in an airport lounge to board the plane, the president's namesake son saw that the rallygoers they had all urged to fight were doing just that, breaching police barricades and laying siege to the Capitol.

An aide called Trump Jr. and suggested he immediately issue a statement urging the rioters to stop. At 2:17 p.m., Trump Jr. hit send on a tweet as he boarded the plane: "This is wrong and not who we are," he wrote. "Be peaceful and use your 1st Amendment rights, but don't start acting like the other side. We have a country to save and this doesn't help anyone."

help anyone.

But the president himself was busy enjoying the spectacle. Trump watched with interest, buoyed to see that his supporters were fighting so hard on his behalf, one close adviser said.

But if the president didn't appear to understand the magnitude of the crisis, those in his orbit did. Conway immediately called a close personal aide who she knew was with the president, and said she was adding her name to the chorus of people urging Trump to speak to his supporters. He needed to tell them to stand down and leave the Capitol, she told the aide.

Conway also told the aide that she had received calls from the D.C. mayor's office asking for help in getting Trump to call up the National Guard.

Ivanka Trump had gone to the Oval Office as soon as the riot became clear, and Graham reached her on her cellphone and implored her for help. "They were all trying to get him to speak out, to tell everyone to leave," said Graham, referring to the small group of aides with Trump on Wednesday afternoon.

Several Republican members of Congress also called White House aides, begging them to get Trump's attention and have him call for the violence to end. The lawmakers reiterated that they had been loyal Trump supporters and were even willing to vote against the electoral college results — but were now scared for their lives, officials said.

When the mob first breached the Capitol, coming within mere seconds of entering the Senate chamber, Pence — who was overseeing the electoral certification — was hustled away to a secure location, where he remained for the duration of the siege, despite multiple suggestions from his Secret Service detail that he leave the Capitol, said an official familiar with Pence's actions that day.

Instead, the vice president fielded calls from congressional leaders furious that the National Guard had not yet been deployed, this official said. Pence, from his secret location in the Capitol, spoke with legislative and military leaders, working to mobilize the soldiers and offering reassurance.

Even as his supporters at the Capitol chanted for Pence to be hanged, Trump never called the vice president to check on him or his family. Marc Short, Pence's chief of staff, eventually called the White House to let them know that Pence and his team were okay, after receiving no outreach from the president or anyone else in the White House.

Meanwhile, in the West Wing, a small group of aides — including Ivanka Trump, White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany and Meadows — was imploring Trump to speak out against the violence. Meadows's staff had prompted him to go see the president, with one aide telling the chief of staff before he entered the Oval Office, "They are going to kill people."

Shortly after 2:30 p.m., the group finally persuaded Trump to send a tweet: "Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement," he wrote. "They are truly on the side of our Country. Stay peaceful!"

But the Twitter missive was insufficient, and the president had not wanted to include the final instruction to "stay peaceful," according to one person familiar with the discussions.

Less than an hour later, aides persuaded Trump to send a second, slightly more forceful tweet: "I am asking for everyone at the U.S. Capitol to remain peaceful," he wrote. "No violence! Remember, WE are the Party of Law & Order

everyone at the U.S. Capitol to remain peaceful," he wrote. "No violence. Remember, WE are the Party of Law & Order — respect the Law and our great men and women in Blue. Thank you!"

'You're very special'

McCarthy did eventually reach Trump, but later told allies that he found the president distracted. So McCarthy repeatedly appeared on television to describe the mayhem, an adviser said, in an effort to explain just how dire the situation was.

McCarthy also called Kushner, who that afternoon was arriving back from a trip to the Middle East. The Secret Service originally warned Kushner that it was unsafe to venture downtown to the White House. McCarthy pleaded with him to persuade Trump to issue a statement for his supporters to leave the Capitol, saying he'd had no luck during his own conversation with Trump, the adviser said. So Kushner headed to the White House.

At one point, Trump worried that the unruly group was frightening GOP lawmakers from doing his bidding and objecting to the election results, an official said.

National security adviser Robert C. O'Brien also began calling members of Congress to ask how he could help. He called Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) around 4 p.m., a Lee spokesman said. In an unlikely twist, Lee had heard from the president earlier — when he accidentally dialed the senator in a bid to reach Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.) to discuss overturning the election.

Others were still having trouble getting through to the White House. Speaking on ABC News shortly before 4 p.m. Wednesday, Chris Christie, a GOP former governor of New Jersey, said he'd spent the last 25 minutes trying to reach Trump directly to convey a simple, if urgent, message.

"The president caused this protest to occur; he's the only one who can make it stop," Christie said. "The president has to come out and tell his supporters to leave the Capitol grounds and to allow the Congress to do their business peacefully. And anything short of that is an abdication of his responsibility."

Around this time, the White House was preparing to put out a video address on behalf of the president. They had begun discussing this option earlier but struggled to organize their effort. Biden, meanwhile, stepped forward with remarks that seemed to rise to the occasion: "The scenes of chaos at the Capitol do not reflect the true America, do not represent who we are."

Trump aides did three takes of the video and chose the most palatable option — despite some West Wing consternation that the president had called the violent protesters "very special."

"This was a fraudulent election, but we can't play into the hands of these people," Trump said in the video, released shortly after 4 p.m. "We have to have peace. So go home. We love you. You're very special. You've seen what happens. You see the way others are treated that are so bad and so evil. I know how you feel. But go home, and go home in peace."

Amid the chaos, D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) had implemented a 6 p.m. curfew for the city, and as darkness fell, the Secret Service told West Wing staff that, save for an essential few, everyone had to leave the White House and go home.

At 6:01 p.m., Trump blasted out yet another tweet, which Twitter quickly deleted and which many in his orbit were particularly furious about, fearing he was further inflaming the still-tense situation.

"These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long," Trump wrote. "Go home with love & in peace. Remember this day forever!"

Thirteen minutes later, at 6:14 p.m., a perimeter was finally established around the Capitol. About 8 p.m., more than six hours after the initial breach, the Capitol was declared secure.

The following evening, on Thursday, Trump released another video, the closest advisers say he is likely to come to a concession speech.

"Congress has certified the results: A new administration will be inaugurated on January 20th," Trump said in the video. "My focus now turns to ensuring a smooth, orderly, and seamless transition of power. This moment calls for healing and reconciliation."

His calls for healing and reconciliation were more than a day too late, many aides said. Yet as Trump watched the media coverage of his video, he grew angry.

The president said he wished he hadn't done it, a senior White House official said, because he feared that the calming words made him look weak.

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The GOP: Ten Republicans vote to impeach, giving the vote bipartisan bona fides that could win over Senate

Assistant Attorney General Eric Dreiband Announces Departure from Civil Rights Division

justice.gov/opa/pr/assistant-attorney-general-eric-dreiband-announces-departure-civil-rights-division

January 7, 2021

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 7, 2021

Assistant Attorney General Eric S. Dreiband of the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division announced his departure from the department, effective Jan. 8, 2021. Dreiband has served as Assistant Attorney General since Nov. 1, 2018.

"It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve as Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division," said Assistant Attorney General Eric S. Dreiband. "The United States of America is and must remain committed to the principle that all persons are created equal and should be judged because of their character, conduct, talent, work, and skills. Our Constitution and civil rights laws embody the ideals that all persons have worth, and are entitled to equal justice, respect, decency, peace, and safety. It is the duty of government to secure these rights, and it is the duty of the Civil Rights Division to protect all people in this nation against any violation of these rights, including hate-motivated violence, exploitation, unlawful discrimination and bigotry, and any other infringement of our Constitutional and federal civil rights. The Civil Rights Division fulfills its duty by enforcing the federal civil rights laws and seeking justice for victims. The Civil Rights Division's enforcement of our civil rights laws also punishes lawbreakers, vindicates the rights of victims, and sends a message to the nation and the world that the United States government and its people do not tolerate illegal bigotry, discrimination, and exploitation of anyone."

Under Assistant Attorney General Dreiband's leadership, the career professionals of the Civil Rights Division set enforcement records and ensured that no area of civil or constitutional rights went unprotected. The division vigorously prosecuted hate crimes, including for the

mass-murders at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; at an El Paso, Texas Walmart where 23 innocent people were killed, and; Charlottesville, Virginia where a white supremacist drove a car into a crowd of protesters. Under Assistant Attorney General Dreiband, the Civil Rights Division filed more sexual harassment in housing lawsuits than ever; protected and sought and obtained relief for victims of racial discrimination in employment, housing, voting, lending, and other areas; held law enforcement accountable; protected U.S. workers; protected free speech, religious exercise, and other rights under the Constitution during the COVID-19 pandemic, and; filed more cases in 2020 on behalf of servicemembers than in any prior year.

Assistant Attorney General Dreiband defended civil and constitutional rights newly under threat or previously overlooked, in addition to aggressively enforcing traditional areas of civil rights protections. That record of accomplishments by the Civil Rights Division includes:

Record Response to Instances of Law Enforcement Misconduct. The Civil Rights Division prosecutes those law enforcement officers who betray the public trust by violating constitutional or other federally-protected rights. In 2019, the division prosecuted more of these criminal cases than ever in its history. These cases typically involved instances of excessive force by police or corrections officers.

Highest Number of Hate Crimes Cases in Decades. Federal law prohibits hate crimes involving physical harm and criminal threats motivated by the victims' protected traits, such as religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, or disability. Under Dreiband's leadership, federal prosecutors fully and fairly enforced these protections. In 2020, the number of hate crime cases charged by the division was the highest in two decades.

Racial Justice. As to racial discrimination, the division has brought and successfully resolved cases involving racial discrimination in employment by local governments, including law enforcement agencies under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; racial discrimination in housing, including racial steering, under the Fair Housing Act; racially discriminatory lending under the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act; race discrimination in voting under the Voting Rights Act; and to allow high school students to apply to college without illegal discrimination under the Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 based on the color of their skin.

Record Number of Sexual Harassment Cases. In 2020, the Civil Rights Division filed more sexual harassment lawsuits against landlords than in any prior year. The division also successfully prosecuted sexual harassment cases against state and local government employers, including on behalf of female firefighters, and against public schools and universities.

Protecting Religious Liberty.Under the Civil Rights Division's *Place to Worship Initiative*, the division significantly increased the number of lawsuits and investigations protecting the right of religious worship of Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims,

Native Americans, and others. Combatting anti-Semitism, including in the form of hate crimes, was also a priority. In the Supreme Court of the United States, the division contributed to victories for religious liberty including the rights of religious employers, such as Catholic schools, and the right to attend parochial schools free of religious discrimination in scholarship programs.

Prison Reform. The Civil Rights Division during Dreiband's tenure investigated, litigated, and successfully resolved cases that involve reforms of state and local prisons and jails. These include cases involving alleged pattern or practice violations of the Constitution against a state prison system for men for guard-on-prisoner excessive force, prisoner-on-prisoner violence, and sexual abuse; state prisons for sexual abuse of female prisoners; state prisons and local jails for excessive force against prisoners; the failure of juvenile justice systems to keep youth reasonably safe from youth-on-youth violence, and; other violations of the Constitution and other federal rights.

Protecting U.S. Workers.The division's *Protecting U.S. Workers Initiative*, which combats employers who abuse temporary foreign visa programs (*e.g.*, H-1 or H-2 visas) by discriminating against U.S. Workers, secured back pay to affected U.S. workers and civil penalties and recently filed a case against a major social media company for its alleged abuse of the temporary visa program.

Increased Resources to Fight Human Trafficking. Under Dreiband's leadership, the division significantly increased the number of prosecutors who are dedicated to prosecuting the modern-day slavery of human trafficking — both in the commercial sex industry and as to forced labor. The division and its U.S. Attorney partners brought over 700 human trafficking cases in recent years.

Disability Rights. During Dreiband's tenure, the division successfully investigated, litigated, and settled hundreds of disability-rights cases. A few examples illustrate this important work. The division reached major settlements with West Virginia to reform its children's mental health system; Amtrak to make its train stations accessible to individuals with disabilities; North Dakota to end unnecessary segregation of individuals with physical disabilities, and; Harris County, Texas to provide accessible voting to voters with disabilities. The division also successfully tried to verdict a lawsuit against the State of Mississippi that alleged that Mississippi violates the Americans with Disabilities Act by unnecessarily segregating people with mental illness in its state hospitals and placing people with mental illness at serious risk of hospitalization as a result of insufficient community-based services. The Civil Rights Division also defended in court protections against coercive abortions for women and their unborn children who are diagnosed with Down's syndrome.

COVID-19 Restrictions.Because there is no pandemic exception to the Constitution and our civil rights laws, the Civil Rights Division successfully fought unlawful pandemic-related restrictions that infringe on individual liberties, including First Amendment rights to free speech and free exercise of religion, in numerous jurisdictions across the nation.

Topic(s):

Civil Rights

Component(s):

Civil Rights Division
Press Release Number:

21-15

U.S. NEWS

Judge bans Proud Boys leader from Washington, D.C., after arrest

The order bans Henry "Enrique" Tarrio, 36, from entering the District of Columbia, with very limited exceptions to meet with his attorney or appear in court.



— Enrique Tarrio, center, a leader of the Proud Boys, joins Trump supporters in a march to declare the 2020 Presidential election results a fraud in Washington on Nov. 14, 2020.

Andrew Lichtenstein / Corbis via Getty Images file

Jan. 5, 2021, 5:15 PM EST / Source: Associated Press

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON – A judge has banned the leader of the Proud Boys from the nation's capital after he was accused of vandalizing a Black Lives Matter banner at a historic black church and found with high-capacity firearm magazines when he was arrested.

The order bans Henry "Enrique" Tarrio, 36, from entering the District of Columbia, with very limited exceptions to meet with his attorney or appear in court. It comes a day after he was arrested arriving in Washington ahead of protests planned by supporters of President Donald Trump to coincide with the congressional vote expected Wednesday to affirm Joe Biden's election victory.

Tarrio was arrested Monday by the Metropolitan Police Department and accused of burning a Black Lives Matter banner that was torn down from a historic black church in downtown Washington last month. He was charged with destruction of property and is also facing a weapons charges after officers found him with the firearm magazines when he was arrested.

According to the criminal complaint, when police pulled Tarrio over on the warrant for vandalizing the Black Lives Matter sign, officers found two unloaded magazines emblazoned with the Proud Boys logo in his bag that have a capacity of 30 rounds each for AR-15 or M4-style weapons.

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U.S. NEWS

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Tarrio said, according to a police report, that he sells the clips and the ones he was carrying were purchased by a customer. "I had a customer that bought those two mags, and they got returned 'cause it was a wrong address," Tarrio said, according to court papers. "And I contacted him, and he's like, 'I'm going to be in DC,' so I'm like, 'Okay, I'll take 'em to you.' So that I can show you proof ....I can give you, like my invoices and stuff like that from it, and, like, the USPS shipping label."

He was arrested in a tunnel near the Capitol, ahead of what is expected to be large far-right protests gathering in D.C. according to Tarrio's online postings: "The ProudBoys will turn out in record numbers on Jan 6th but this time with a twist," saying they'd spread out incognito.

Tarrio's attorney did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

The Associated Press

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Trump doesn't ask backers to disperse after storming Capitol

pbs.org/newshour/politics/gop-lawmakers-ask-trump-to-deescalate-violence

Associated Press January 6, 2021



WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump encouraged supporters who stormed the Capitol on Wednesday in protest of his reelection defeat to "remain peaceful," but he did not call for them to disperse.

The seat of democracy descended into chaos when protestors overwhelmed police and bulled their way into the Capitol, forcing a delay of the joint session of Congress where lawmakers were counting electoral votes that will affirm Democrat Joe Biden's White House victory two weeks before Inauguration Day.

Trump offered only a muted response to the violence as loyalists brandishing his paraphernalia clashed with police, occupied the Capitol and even stormed the Senate chamber.

Under growing pressure from allies to condemn the violence, Trump tweeted, "No violence!" adding: "Remember, WE are the Party of Law & Order – respect the Law and our great men and women in Blue."

The commander in chief did not ask supporters to vacate the area as the unrest continued.

At a rally earlier, Trump had encouraged supporters to march on the Capitol and suggested at one point that he would join them on Capitol Hill. In his remarks, he used incendiary language with violent undertones.

Trump had urged his supporters to "get rid of the weak Congress people" — presumably through primary challenges. He said "get the weak ones get out. This is the time for strength."

Republican lawmakers pleaded with Trump to do more to stop the violence. House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy of California said he told the president to "calm individuals down."

"I've already talked to the president," MCarthy told Fox News. "I called him. I think we need to make a statement, make sure that we can calm individuals down."

A Senate ally, Republican Marco Rubio of Florida, appealed directly to the White House: "Mr. President @realDonaldTrump the men & women of law enforcement are under assault. It is crucial you help restore order by sending resources to assist the police and ask those doing this to stand down."

> Mr. President @realDonaldTrump the men & women of law enforcement are under assault. It is crucial you help restore order by sending resources to assist the police and ask those doing this to stand down.
>
> — Marco Rubio (@marcorubio) January 6, 2021

Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Wis., posted a video message urging Trump to "call it off."

"This is Banana Republic crap that we're watching right now," said Gallagher, who had spoken out against objections from fellow Republicans to certifying the Electoral College vote that Biden won.

> We are witnessing absolute banana republic crap in the United States Capitol right now. @realdonaldtrump, you need to call this off. pic.twitter.com/0QGx2PlXFY
>
> — Rep. Mike Gallagher (@RepGallagher) January 6, 2021

Vice President Mike Pence, who was ushered out of the Senate chamber to a secure location as protesters breached the building, tweeted for protesters to disperse.

"The violence and destruction taking place at the US Capitol Must Stop and it Must Stop Now," he said. "Anyone involved must respect Law Enforcement officers and immediately leave the building."

Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe and Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

The New York Times https://nyti.ms/3pXR9iQ

Stunning Images as a Mob Storms the U.S. Capitol

Supporters of President Trump broke into the building as lawmakers were certifying Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s electoral victory.



By Azi Paybarah and Brent Lewis

Jan. 6, 2021

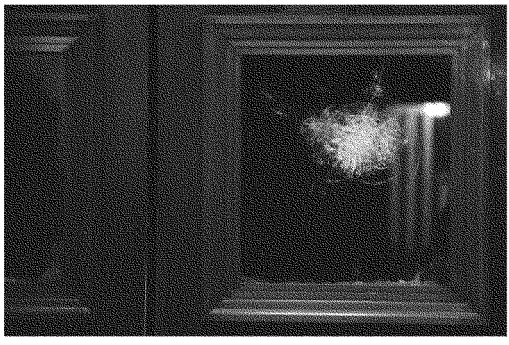
Rioters scaling the United States Capitol, marching with Confederate flags and riot gear.

Lawmakers scurrying off the floor of the Senate, ducking for safety.

Capitol Police officers standing near a barricaded door with guns drawn, guarding the House chamber.

These are among the stunning images from a historic day on which a mob of people loyal to President Trump broke into the Capitol to try to prevent lawmakers from certifying the Electoral College count to confirm President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s victory.

The chaos, which lasted more than three hours and was viewed around the world, was another reminder of the challenges Mr. Biden will inherit in two weeks: an extraordinarily divided country, its political fabric frayed by an economic crisis, a deadly pandemic and four years of Mr. Trump's incendiary governance.



Trump supporters caused extensive damage as they forced their way inside the Capitol on Wednesday, interrupting Congress as it attempted to certify President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s victory. Jonathan Ernst/Reuters

Insurgents acting in the president's name vandalized Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office, smashed windows, looted art and briefly took control of the Senate chamber, where they took turns posing for photographs with fists up on the dais where Vice President Mike Pence had been presiding just minutes before. Outside the building, they erected a gallows, punctured the tires of a police S.U.V. and left a note on its windshield reading, "PELOSI IS SATAN."

"This is what the president has caused today, this insurrection," Senator Mitt Romney, Republican of Utah, said as he and other senators were hustled off to a secure location.

Architect of the Capitol officials inspecting damage in the rotunda on Thursday. Nicholas Kamm/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

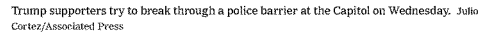
It took reinforcements from other law enforcement agencies, including the city's Metropolitan Police Department, to restore order. At least 52 people were arrested, according to Chief Robert J. Contee III of the Metropolitan Police Department, including five on weapons charges and at least 26 on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol.

Pipe bombs were found at the headquarters of both the Republican and the Democratic National Committees, and a cooler containing a long gun and Molotov cocktails was discovered on the Capitol grounds, the chief said.

Broken glass and debris still littered the corridors on Thursday, the morning after Trump supporters stormed the Capitol. Jason Andrew for The New York Times

The mob swarmed past the police and barriers with relative ease, some spraying officers with chemical agents. The Capitol Police appeared to be outnumbered and unprepared for the onslaught, even as it was openly organized on social media sites like Gab and Parler.

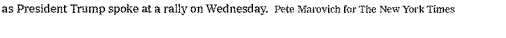
The police response drew criticism from law enforcement experts and members of Congress. Activists who participated in demonstrations against racial injustice over the summer condemned what they saw as a double standard, with many pointing out that they had been hit with rubber bullets, manhandled, surrounded and arrested while behaving peacefully.



Trump supporters try to break through a police barrier at the Capitol on Wednesday. Julio Cortez/Associated Press

By Wednesday evening, the Capitol had been cleared of pro-Trump extremists and Congress confirmed Mr. Biden's victory early Thursday morning.

In a statement just before 4 a.m. Thursday, the president finally acknowledged his loss, saying, "Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will be an orderly transition on January 20th."



Spectators crowded the National Mall as President Trump spoke at a rally on Wednesday. Pete Marovich for The New York Times

Even before losing the Nov. 3 election, Mr. Trump warned his supporters that the election would be rigged against him, and encouraged them to physically prevent it from happening.

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On Wednesday, as thousands of his supporters gathered in Washington, Mr. Trump told them at a rally near the White House to "walk down to the Capitol," saying that "you will never take back our country with weakness."

That afternoon, Republican lawmakers loyal to Mr. Trump tried to overturn the results of the presidential election by falsely saying the election was stolen, a claim that has been rejected by every court that has examined the evidence.

Inflamed Trump supporters stormed the Senate side of the Capitol on Wednesday afternoon, after the president's rally. Jason Andrew for The New York Times

Just after 2 p.m., the gathering turned violent and chaotic as Trump supporters swarmed the Capitol, breaking through metal gates that had been placed around the building. They then scaled the outside of the Capitol and broke through the front doors.

Some wore riot helmets and military-style protective vests. Many took selfies as they broke into the home of American democracy and proudly shared the images on social media.

Trump supporters forced entrance into the Capitol. Win McNamee/Getty Images

Some waved banners announcing their loyalties as they entered the Capitol, including giant yellow "Don't Tread on Me" flags, popular among Libertarians and supporters of limited government. Others paraded through the halls waving American flags covered with pro-Trump messages (technically, a violation of how the government says the American flag should be treated). Several people brandished the battle flag of the Confederacy.

People ducked for cover in the House gallery as rampaging Trump supporters made their way into the Capitol. Andrew Harnik/Associated Press

Lawmakers from both parties denounced the break-in as they themselves huddled for safety.

For a time, senators and members of the House were locked inside their respective chambers. Security officials instructed members there to reach under their seats and put on gas masks after tear gas was used in the Capitol Rotunda.

As they hid, some lawmakers pleaded for Mr. Trump to tell his supporters to retreat.

Representative Steve Cohen, Democrat of Tennessee, yelled out to Republicans on the House floor: "Call Trump, tell him to call off his revolutionary guards."

The Capitol Police tried to defend the House chamber from rioters. Andrew Harnik/Associated Press

Guns were drawn as members of the mob tried breaking into the House chamber where just moments earlier lawmakers were going through the usually uneventful business of certifying the presidential election winner.

Trump supporters broke through a police barrier outside the Capitol. John Minchillo/Associated Press

One woman was fatally shot by a police officer inside the Capitol, Chief Contee said on Wednesday evening. Another woman and two men died near the Capitol after they "appeared to have suffered from separate medical emergencies," he said.

Mayor Muriel Bowser of Washington announced a curfew for the city beginning at 6 p.m. Chief Contee said, "It was clear the crowd was intent on causing harm to our officers by deploying chemical irritants on police to force entry into the United States Capitol building."

Trump supporters inside the Capitol after they stormed barricades and entered the building. Erin Schaff/The New York Times

The chaos on Wednesday was not spontaneous, but rather came after a monthslong effort to delegitimize the election and a yearslong crusade by Mr. Trump to undermine any opposition.

Calls for violence against lawmakers and talk of taking over the Capitol have circulated online for months.

Organizing for this attempted takeover took place on social media sites like Gab and Parler, platforms whose unwillingness to curtail fake news or threatening messages have made them popular with the far right and supporters of Mr. Trump.

Participants exchanged messages on those sites about which streets to use in order to avoid the police and which tools to bring to help pry open doors.

President Trump at a rally near the White House. Pete Marovich for The New York Times

As images of lawmakers huddling for safety circulated around the world, Mr. Trump's aides urged him to call for an end to the violence. Mr. Trump issued one tweet just after 3 p.m., which did not appear to have any effect.

Mr. Biden appeared at a news conference and called on Mr. Trump to go on national television, condemn the chaos and urge the people in the Capitol to retreat immediately.

By 4:17 p.m., Mr. Trump had posted a minute-long video on Twitter, falsely claiming the election was "stolen" and telling the people who had stormed into the Capitol to leave peacefully. "We love you," he said. "You're very special."

Twitter immediately flagged the video for misleading content and "due to a risk of violence."

The police searched the Capitol after a mob stormed the building. Anna Moneymaker for The New York Times

It took the police more than three hours to retake control of the Capitol. They used riot gear, batons and shields to force back the intruders.

As lawmakers hid for safety and the police sought to establish control, rioters roamed the halls.

One rioter hung from the balcony in the Senate chamber. Win McNamee/Getty Images

They eventually broke into the Senate chamber. Some gleefully posed for pictures in the seats and offices of the lawmakers they had just chased away.

The office of Nancy Pelosi, the California Democrat who as House speaker has led political opposition to Mr. Trump's agenda, was also broken into.

The rioters, who said they were trying to protect democracy, at times appeared cheerful about their ability to wander freely inside the Capitol.

Trump supporters outside the Senate chamber after breaching Capitol security. Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA, via Shutterstock

A Trump supporter at a desk in the U.S. Capitol. Saul Loeb/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Around 5:40 p.m., security officials at the Capitol announced that the building was secure. Twenty minutes later, the city's curfew went into effect.

The police seized five guns and arrested at least 13 people during the violent protest, Chief Contee said.

The police detained members of the mob outside of the House chamber. Drew Angerer/Getty Images

Marie Fazio contributed reporting.

INTERNET

Extremists made little secret of ambitions to 'occupy' Capitol in weeks before attack

On Thursday, Washington Police Chief Robert Contee said at a news conference that there was "no intelligence that suggested there would be a breach of the U.S. Capitol."



— Trump supporters gather in front of the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Jon Cherry / Getty Images

Jan. 8, 2021, 11:58 AM EST / Updated Jan. 8, 2021, 12:36 PM EST

By Ben Collins and Brandy Zadrozny

A digital flyer made public on Instagram and Facebook in December made little secret of the ambitions of some of the people planning to visit Washington on Jan. 6: "Operation Occupy the Capitol."

That call to arms is just one of the many warning signs on extremist sites and mainstream social media platforms that extremism experts say were easy to spot but ultimately disregarded by law enforcement in the runup to Wednesday's riot at the Capitol, which led to the deaths of five people, including Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, 42, who was reportedly hit with a fire extinguisher during the melee.

Washington, D.C., Attorney General Karl A. Racine told MSNBC on Friday that "there were no surprises there" when it came to what extremists prepared to do before Wednesday's siege.

"Everyone who was a law enforcement officer or a reporter knew exactly what these hate groups were planning," Racine said. "They were planning to descend on Washington, D.C., ground center was the Capitol, and they were planning to charge and, as Rudy Giuliani indicated, to do combat justice at the Capitol,"

On the fringe message board 8kun, which is popular with QAnon followers, for example, users talked for weeks about a siege of the Capitol, some talking about it like a foregone conclusion. Others simply debated how violent the uprising should be, and if police should be exempt.

"You can go to Washington on Jan 6 and help storm the Capital," said one 8kun user a day before the siege. "As many Patriots as can be. We will storm the government buildings, kill cops, kill security guards, kill federal employees and agents, and demand a recount."

Some users pushed back. "Why kill cops and security guards? I was under the impression the enemies were the high government officials and the rest are uninformed masses?" The Network Contagion Research Institute, a nonprofit that tracks disinformation trends, cataloged some of the threats before the rally. They said there was a substantial uptick in insurrectionist hashtags both on extremist sites and on the open web, specifically a large bump in traffic around the hashtags "1776" and "Occupy" in the night before the rally.

How Trump's connection to conspiracy theory community fueled Capitol riot



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Online far-right movements fracture in wake of Capitol riot over 'gullible' QAnon believers

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Pro-Trump rioters plan second act – but not just in Washington

Denver Riggleman, a former Republican congressman from Virginia who has been warning for months about potential violence from QAnon supporters, said he is particularly worried about extremist groups in the 12 days remaining in President Donald Trump's presidency.

"I think we better be ready for Jan. 20, and I mean at every state Capitol that was contested, also," Riggleman said. "We need a coordinated effort to detect groups planning now for Inauguration Day – a whole-of-government approach with public trust, data companies and research universities."

Reports from numerous news organizations warned that online forums were being flooded with calls for mayhem.

A day before the rally, the investigative journalism website Bellingcat published an article detailing the online convergence of radical conservative groups with QAnon and white supremecist groups leading up to what the president promised would be a "wild protest," specifically mentioning their online discussion about storming and burning the Capitol and specific threats directed at D.C. government officials and police.

The Washington Post published a similar article, citing specific posts on the encrypted app Telegram and Parler, a Twitter alternative, about sneaking illegal weapons into the rally. NBC News also published an article highlighting the threats, using research from Advance DemocracyInc., a global research organization that studies disinformation and extremism.

"Proud Boys and Hardcore Trump Supporters Are Turning Their Backs on Cops," was the headline at Vice News on Tuesday, reporting that the arrest of the Proud Boys leader Henry "Enrique" Tarrio, 36, by D.C. police had resulted in online threats from members to "burn down" the Capitol.

Trump urged his supporters to join his rally in the days before the event. Once at the rally, he urged his supporters to march on the Capitol.

Ben Collins

Ben Collins covers disinformation, extremism and the internet for NBC News.



Brandy Zadrozny

Brandy Zadrozny is an investigative reporter for NBC News.

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Proud Boys celebrate after Trump's debate callout

nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/proud-boys-celebrate-after-trump-s-debate-call-out-n1241512

September 30, 2020



Sept. 30, 2020, 3:12 AM UTC / Updated Sept. 30, 2020, 12:34 PM UTC

By Ben Collins and Brandy Zadrozny

The Proud Boys, a far-right extremist group, pledged allegiance to President Donald Trump on Tuesday night after he told the group to "stand back and stand by" during the first presidential debate.

Many people on social media who identify with the group echoed that language, saying they were "standing down and standing by." One known social media account for the group made "Stand back. Stand by" part of its new logo.

Trump was asked by debate moderator Chris Wallace to disavow white supremacy during a part of the debate focused on race. Wallace asked whether Trump would urge white supremacist groups that inflamed violence at nationwide protests to "stand down."

Trump said to "give me a name" when asked to denounce a specific group, and former Vice President Joe Biden called out the Proud Boys.

But Trump did not denounce any far-right or white supremacist groups, and he then pivoted to talk about antifa.

"Proud Boys, stand back and stand by, but I'll tell you what, somebody's got to do something about antifa and the left, because this is not a right-wing problem. This is a left-wing problem," Trump said.

On the Proud Boys' account on the social media app Telegram, the group appeared to take the statement as marching orders.

"Standing down and standing by sir," the account wrote. The account then posted two videos of the answer, including one with the caption "God. Family. Brotherhood," in which a man howled at the TV in response to Trump's response.

Megan Squire, a computer science professor at Elon University in North Carolina who tracks online extremism, said Trump's giving the Proud Boys orders was their long-sought "fantasy."

"To say Proud Boys are energized by this is an understatement," Squire said. "They were pro-Trump before this shoutout, and they are absolutely over the moon now. Their fantasy is to fight antifa in his defense, and he apparently just asked them to do just that."

The Proud Boys, a self-described "Western chauvinist" organization, is considered a violent, nationalistic, Islamophobic, transphobic and misogynistic hate group, according to the Anti-Defamation League, a nonprofit organization that tracks extremist groups. Proud Boys members marched at the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, and have organized against Black Lives Matter protests in recent months.

The group recently staged a rally in Portland, Oregon, in support of Trump. About 200 people, some armed with guns, attended the rally, short of the expectations of thousands.

Proud Boys organizer Joe Biggs also posted after the debate that he was "standing by," and he said the president "basically said to go f--- them up."

"President Trump told the proud boys to stand by because someone needs to deal with ANTIFA... well sir! we're ready!!" Biggs wrote.

Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt said in a tweet that the president's answer was "astonishing."

"President Trump owes America an apology or an explanation," he said. "Now."

Trumps' comments drew widespread condemnation on social media.

Yamiche Alcindor, White House correspondent for "PBS NewsHour," tweeted that she quoted the refusal to condemn white supremacy multiple times on air.

> This. This is Donald Trump's America. https://t.co/wld2mmGTwe

> — Joe Biden (@JoeBiden) September 30, 2020

"It was a remarkable moment for the commander in chief as white supremacy is seen by national security experts as a threat to national security," she wrote.

David French, a conservative commentator who has been critical of Trump, tweeted that Trump's comments were "a call to be ready."

"In a nation wracked by unrest, that was one of the most irresponsible and reprehensible statements I've ever seen from a president," French wrote.

Democratic politicians also weighed in.

"Let's be clear: The Proud Boys are white supremacists," tweeted Oregon Gov. Kate Brown. "Racism and hate are not forms of patriotism."

Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey tweeted: "Donald Trump was asked to condemn white supremacists tonight. He wouldn't. He must be defeated."

Biden commented on the Proud Boys reaction, responding to a journalist who tweeted out a screenshot of the group celebrating the mention.

"This. This is Donald Trump's America," Biden tweeted.

Ben Collins
Ben Collins covers disinformation, extremism and the internet for NBC News.

Brandy Zadrozny
Brandy Zadrozny is an investigative reporter for NBC News.



U.S. NEWS

Trump supporters who died during Capitol riot left online presence

"Load your guns and take to the streets!" wrote Kevin Greeson, 55, of Athens, Alabama.



— Benjamin Phillips, Rosanne Boyland and Kevin Greeson. via NBC News

Jan. 7, 2021, 8:18 PM EST

By Ben Kesslen

A computer programmer who founded a social media website for supporters of President Donald Trump and an Alabama man who posted online "Load your guns and take to the streets!" were among the four who died when a mob stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Another victim was Ashli Babbitt, 35, who was fatally shot by Capitol Police during the Wednesday incursion by rioters who demanded Congress reject the presidential election results. An ardent Trump supporter, Babbitt followed and promoted many well-known radical conservative activists and conspiracy theories.

The others, Kevin Greeson, 55, of Athens, Alabama; Benjamin Philips, 50, of Ringtown, Pennsylvania; and Rosanne Boyland, 34, of Kennesaw, Georgia, died of medical emergencies, Washington, D.C., police said Thursday.

Greeson had a history of high blood pressure and suffered a heart attack, his family said, and is survived by his wife, Kristi, and children.

"Kevin was an advocate of President Trump and attended the event on January 6, 2020 to show his support," the family said in a statement. "He was not there to participate in violence or rioting, nor did he condone such actions."

Greeson appeared to be active on Parler, the "Twitter for conservatives," where an account with his name and picture lodged threats against Democrat and Republican politicians who Greeson said did not sufficiently support Trump.

Responding to a post that floated the "militia option" to keep Trump in office, Greeson wrote, "I'm in.. call me I have guns and ammo!" He interacted with posts from the far-right Proud Boys, telling them to give Antifa "hell."

Capitol rioters fueled by online extremism



Greeson also said he hoped House Speaker Nancy Pelosi would get Covid-19 and die, and on Dec. 17 wrote, "Let's take this f----- Country BACK!! Load your guns and take to the streets!"

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Kristi Greeson would not confirm whether the account belonged to her husband, but photos he posted on Parler are images of the same person found on his Facebook and Twitter accounts, which were verified by NBC News.

Philips, 50, died of a stroke, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported, but NBC News was unable to verify his cause of death. The computer programmer founded a social media site for Trump supporters, Trumparoo.com, the Inquirer reported. The site coordinated rides to Washington for people who wanted to attend the protest.

"As my children are grieving and processing yesterday's shocking events, I respectfully request privacy," Nicole Mun, Philip's ex-wife, said Thursday in a statement.

Mun said she no longer had a relationship with Philip and had nothing further to say. Other family members did not return repeated requests for comment.

Boyland also died because of a medical emergency, authorities said, providing no further details First responders performed CPR on her around 5 p.m. Wednesday after she collapsed, reported NBC Atlanta affiliate WXIA. Her family did not return phone calls and emails seeking more information.



Ben Kesslen

Ben Kesslen is a reporter for NBC News.

Ali Gostanian contributed.

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NEWS MSNBC TODAY

THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

January 7, 2021

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

For more than thirty years, I have fought on behalf of America's students to expand the options they have to pursue a world-class education. As you know, too many of them are denied an equal opportunity to a high-quality education simply because of where they grow up or how much money their family makes. You rightly have called this one of the most significant civil rights issues of our time.

Leading the U.S. Department of Education has given me an exceptional opportunity to advocate on behalf of the forgotten students the traditional system leaves behind. We have achieved much.

We have sparked a national conversation about putting students and parents in charge of education, leading to expanded school choice and education freedom in many states. We have restored the proper federal role by returning power to states, communities, educators, and parents. We have returned due process to our nation's schools and defended the First Amendment rights of students and teachers. We have dramatically improved the way students interact with Federal Student Aid. We have lifted up students by restoring year-round Pell, expanding Second Chance Pell, delivering unprecedented opportunities for students at HBCUs, and so much more.

Finally, Mr. President, I know with certainty that history will show we were correct in our repeated urging of and support for schools reopening this year and getting all of America's students back to learning. This remains the greatest challenge our nation's students face, particularly students of color and students with disabilities. Millions are being denied meaningful access to education right now, in no small part because of the union bosses who control so much of the traditional system.

We should be highlighting and celebrating your Administration's many accomplishments on behalf of the American people. Instead, we are left to clean up the mess caused by violent protestors overrunning the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to undermine the people's business. That behavior was unconscionable for our country. There is no mistaking the impact your rhetoric had on the situation, and it is the inflection point for me.

Impressionable children are watching all of this, and they are learning from us. I believe we each have a moral obligation to exercise good judgement and model the behavior we hope they would emulate. They must know from us that America is greater than what transpired yesterday. To that end, today I resign from my position, effective Friday, January 8, in support of the oath I took to our Constitution, our people, and our freedoms.

Holding this position has been the honor of a lifetime, and I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to serve America and her students.

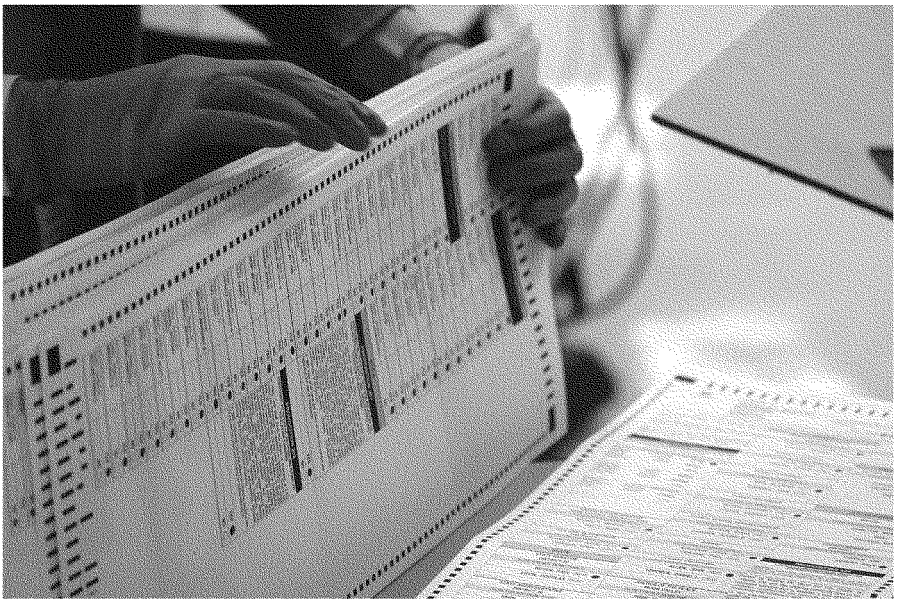
Sincerely,

Betsy DeVos

Arizona Supreme Court upholds election challenge dismissal

AP apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-arizona-phoenix-e929a14f4dca0de3d9929fb4cef4a6fb

January 6, 2021



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By BOB CHRISTIE and JACQUES BILLEAUDJanuary 6, 2021 GMT

FILE - In this Nov. 4, 2020, file photo, Maricopa County elections officials count ballots in Phoenix. A federal judge on Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020, heard arguments over whether to dismiss a lawsuit that seeks to decertify election results the election results that gave Democrat President-elect Joe Biden his Arizona victory. (AP Photo/Matt York, File)

FILE - In this Nov. 4, 2020, file photo, Maricopa County elections officials count ballots in Phoenix. A federal judge on Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020, heard arguments over whether to dismiss a lawsuit that seeks to decertify election results the election results that gave Democrat President-elect Joe Biden his Arizona victory. (AP Photo/Matt York, File)

PHOENIX (AP) — The Arizona Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld a lower court decision dismissing the last in a series of challenges that sought to decerify Democrat Joe Biden's victory in the state.

The high court ruling is the second time the majority-Republican court has turned aside an appeal of a court loss by backers of President Donald Trump seeking to overturn the results of the election. In all, eight lawsuits challenging Biden's Arizona win have failed. It comes the day before a divided Congress is set to certify Biden's victory.

Tuesday's ruling from a four-judge panel of the high court agreed with a trial court judge in Pinal County that plaintiff Staci Burk lacked the right to contest the election. That's because she wasn't a registered voter at the time she filed her lawsuit, as required in state election contests. Both courts also agreed that she made her legal challenge too late, after the five-day period for filing such an action had passed.

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Burk said in her lawsuit that she was a qualified Arizona voter, but officials said they discovered she wasn't registered to vote. She later said she mistakenly thought "qualified electors" were people who were merely eligible to vote, and that her voter registration was canceled because election workers were unable to verify her address.

The Supreme Court said the fact that she wasn't a registered voter was fatal to her ability to file an election challenge and that Burk admitted she knew she wasn't registered.

"There is nothing before the Court to indicate that Appellant timely contacted the appropriate authorities to correct any problems with her voter registration," Chief Justice Robert Brutinel wrote. "An election challenge ... is not the proper vehicle to reinstate voter registration."

Biden won the state over Republican President Donald Trump by more than 10,000 votes and the results were certified last month.

The lawsuit brought by Burk, who isn't a lawyer but represented herself, is nearly identical to a lawsuit dismissed in early December in federal court in Phoenix.

Burk's lawsuit alleged Arizona's election systems have security flaws that let election workers and foreign countries manipulate results. Opposing attorneys said the lawsuit used conspiracy theories to make allegations against a voting equipment vendor without any proof to back up claims of widespread election fraud in Arizona.

No evidence of voter or election fraud has emerged in Arizona.

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Despite that, Republicans who control the Legislature are pushing to review how Maricopa County, the state's most populous, ran its election. Two subpoenas issued by the state Senate seeking an audit and to review voting machines, ballots and other materials are being challenged by Maricopa County.

Two of the failed legal challenges focused on the use of Sharpies to complete ballots were dismissed. Another lawsuit in which the Trump campaign sought inspection of ballots was dismissed after the campaign's lawyer acknowledged the small number of ballots at issue wouldn't have changed the outcome.

A judge dismissed a lawsuit in which the Arizona Republican Party tried to determine whether voting machines had been hacked.

Then a separate challenge by Arizona GOP Chairwoman Kelli Ward was tossed out by a judge who concluded the Republican leader failed to prove fraud and that the evidence presented at trial wouldn't reverse Trump's defeat. The state Supreme Court upheld that decision in an earlier ruling.

And a federal judge dismissed a lawsuit by conservative lawyer Sidney Powell, who alleged widespread election fraud through the manipulation of voting equipment. Burk's lawsuit repeated some of Powell's allegations word-for-word.

This story has been corrected to show that the court is majority Republican, not all Republican.

Video shows Congressman McGovern exiting House soon before woman fatally shot

telegram.com/story/news/2021/01/08/video-shows-mcgovern-exiting-house-soon-before-woman-fatally-shot/6603817002/



Brad Petrishen | Telegram & Gazette

Video released by the Washington Post on Friday shows U.S. Rep. James P. McGovern of Worcester exiting the House floor shortly before police shot and killed a woman trying to get into the area.

In the video, McGovern can be seen being led away with others from the other side of a glass door that the rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol were trying to breach.

McGovern and others were in the Speaker's Lobby — which provides access to the House floor — as the angry mob screamed at three Capitol Police officers guarding the Lobby doors to move away.

As McGovern described to the Telegram & Gazette Wednesday and Thursday, chairs and other furniture had been stacked up against the doors to try and stop a breach. People can be seen pounding the glass, as he also described, including a man who nearly shattered it with several punches.

McGovern — who had assumed the gavel at Wednesday's electoral certification hearing after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was led away early — said Wednesday he was the last member to leave the House.

McGovern can be seen in the far left of the Post's video. He is the only lawmaker in the frame who the newspaper identifies by name.

After McGovern and the others disappear from view, the unruly crowd continues to shout at officers to step aside, including the woman who would soon be killed, Ashli Babbitt.

A short time later, the three officers step aside and, the Post reported, were led away by officers in tactical gear who had showed up behind the rioters.

At that point, with the door clear of the officers, people began striking it with fists and objects, succeeding in breaking some of the glass.

Babbitt is then shot by an officer on the other side of the door as she tries to step through the broken glass and get inside.

McGovern was unaware of the shooting when he spoke to the T&G from lockdown Wednesday, as an aide on the call informed him of what had happened.

His office said Friday that McGovern and others with him, including Don Sisson, staff director of the House Committee on Rules, had already descended staircases en route to a secure location at that point.

McGovern, who is chairman of the powerful Rules Committee, may be called into service soon should Democrats follow through on a possible second impeachment of President Donald J. Trump.

In a news release Friday evening, Pelosi said that if Trump does not resign for his role in the historic assault on the Capitol, she has instructed the Rules Committee to "be prepared to move forward" on multiple avenues aimed at removing the president, one of which is impeachment.

If McGovern is charged with navigating an impeachment attempt to the floor though the Rules Committee, it will be his second time doing so.

He wielded the gavel at December 2019 hearings in which rules were set for Trump's impeachment on allegations he improperly sought help from Ukraine to boost his prospects of re-election.

INTERNET

Violent threats ripple through far-right internet forums ahead of protest

In anticipation of possible violence, Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser has asked residents to stay away from the downtown area where protesters will be marching.



— Trump supporters at a rally in Freedom Plaza in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday

Samuel Corum / Getty Images

Jan. 5, 2021, 7:07 PM EST

By Brandy Zadrozny and Ben Collins

Online forums popular with conservatives and far-right activists have been filled in recent days with threats and expectations of violence ahead of a planned protest in Washington on

Wednesday to coincide with congressional certification of the election.

In anticipation of possible violence, Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser has asked residents to stay away from the downtown area where protesters will be marching. Every city police officer will be on duty, and the National Guard has been mobilized.

"In regards to the protests planned for January 6th, the violent rhetoric we're seeing online is at a new level," said Daniel J. Jones, president of Advance Democracy Inc., a global research organization that studies disinformation and extremism. "There are endorsements of violence across all of the platforms."

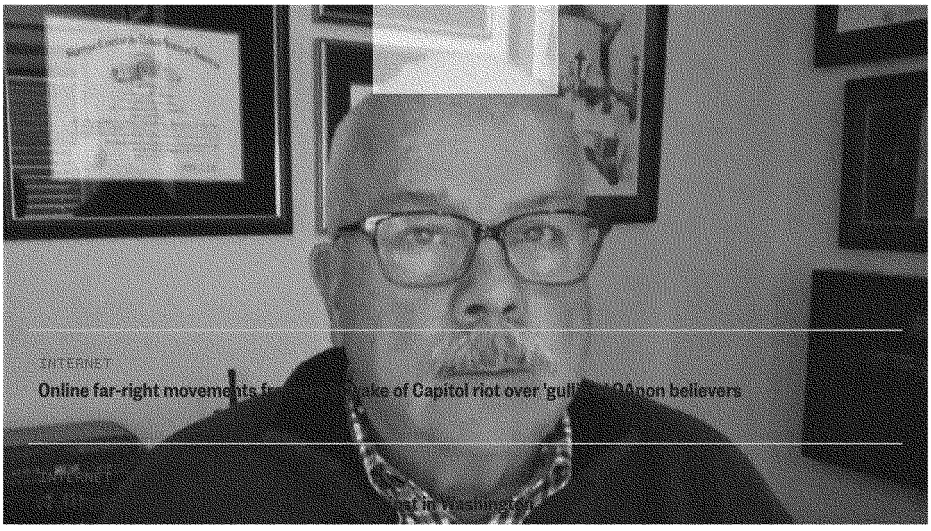
A new report from Advance Democracy chronicled a wide variety of posts about the protests, including many that anticipated violence from other groups and called for people to arm themselves.

On Twitter, QAnon-related accounts posted conspiracy theories alleging that Black Lives Matter and antifa activists were going to kill supporters of President Donald Trump at the protest and suggested that protesters arm themselves Wednesday, calling it "Independence Day."

On TikTok, several videos with hundreds of thousands of views promoted violence at the rally. A user with a militia-related avatar told viewers to carry guns even though firearms are prohibited in the areas of the city where the demonstrations are taking place.

"Take your motherf---ing guns. That's the whole point of going," the person said.

Fmr. Capitol Police Chief discusses DC's preparation for coming pro-Trump protests



On TheDonald, a far-right message board that formed after its community was banned from Reddit, moderators were promoting some calls for violence.

Calls for violence were among the top five comments on more than half of the posts discussing congressional certification of votes, while 12 percent "explicitly endorsed violence in the main post itself," according to the Advance Democracy report.

A representative comment suggested that people "travel in packs and do not let them disarm someone without stacking bodies."

Half of the top posts about the Electoral College certification on TheDonald's landing page included unmoderated calls for violence, according to the report.

The online threats target both Democrats and Republicans, identified as "traitors" for acknowledging the election results, Jones said.

"Much of the anger behind the violent rhetoric online is based on the false belief, propagated by President Trump and echoed by his most ardent supporters in the House and Senate, that there was widespread election fraud in November," Jones said. "This false narrative only seems to be

gaining momentum. Our concern, of course, is that the violent online rhetoric resulting from the president's false claims produces real-life violence."

While spreading near-constant misinformation about the election and false claims that he actually won, Trump has also been promoting the protest for weeks, tweeting about it at least six times and suggesting that he would make an appearance.

The threats of violence have online extremism experts concerned.

> I will be there. Historic day! https://t.co/k6LStsWpfy
>
> – Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) January 3, 2021

"The threats are coming from what seems like every direction, so it's hard to triangulate and evaluate everything," said Megan Squire, a computer science professor at Elon University who tracks white nationalists online.

"I'm getting a strong 'last stand' vibe from some of these groups," Squire said. "I hope they go quietly, but it seems like that is not what they want to do."

Calls to violence have also been pulled from anonymous QAnon fans on the depths of extremist websites like 8kun to viral posts on Twitter. L. Lin Wood, a lawyer and QAnon influencer, tweeted a link Monday to an 8kun-hosted document that openly advocated for civil war. It was retweeted over 25,000 times. The post was also shared by MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell, a Trump donor, and Ron Watkins, who runs the QAnon hub 8kun, and it has been retweeted by Trump several times this week.

QAnon supporters have been looking forward to Wednesday for weeks, many of them believing in a legally impossible scenario in which Vice President Mike Pence extrajudicially overrides the results of the election in an elaborate ceremony that immediately causes civil unrest. QAnon believers, who call it the "Pence Card," believe Trump has promoted gatherings in Washington to effectively kick off a civil war after the fictitious event.

Realizing that their dreams of overriding the Electoral College will almost certainly be dashed Wednesday, Watkins and Wood have soured on Pence and begun circulating fake email correspondence claiming that Pence and then-House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., plotted to kick Trump off the Republican ticket in 2016.

The documents, however, were created in 2016 by an internet prankster named Marco Chacon, who created intentionally over-the-top fake documents hoping to dupe conspiracy theorists.

"It's an absurd story told in an absurd manner with absurd trappings," Chacon said.

Chacon said it's unclear how Watkins and Wood found the forged emails, but conspiracy theorists have provided a substantial traffic boost to the years-old fake documents in the last several days.

Chacon said he's not surprised that QAnon supporters have used his faked documents to create another scapegoat for Trump's inability to overturn the election results.

"This is a testament to the power of confirmation bias," Chacon said. "QAnon supporters literally can't tell the difference between truth and fantasy when it comes to anything with a partisan valence."

But with the "Pence Card" falling apart, he is worried what will happen as QAnon supporters run out of magical thinking.

"It seems like they've decided there's nothing but civil war," Chacon said.



Brandy Zadrozny

Brandy Zadrozny is an investigative reporter for NBC News.

Ben Collins

Ben Collins covers disinformation, extremism and the internet for NBC News.

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Dark-money GOP fund funneled millions of dollars to groups that pushed voter fraud claims

cnbc.com/2021/01/13/dark-money-gop-fund-funneled-millions-groups-that-pushed-voter-fraud-claims.html

January 13, 2021



Key Points

- A dark-money group used by Republican donors funneled millions of dollars to high-profile conservative organizations that pushed or investigated claims of election fraud before and after Joe Biden defeated President Trump.
- That group, the Donors Trust, is officially labeled as a nonprofit. The designation allows financiers to give to the organization anonymously. That money is then channeled to other dark-money groups.
- Among the pro-Trump groups that have received money from the Donors Fund are pro-Trump students organization Turning Point USA and an anti-immigration organization that has been called a hate group.

Members of the National Guard and the Washington D.C. police keep a small group of demonstrators away from the Capital after thousands of Donald Trump supporters stormed the United States Capitol building following a "Stop the Steal" rally on January 06, 2021 in Washington, DC.

Spencer Platt | Getty Images

A dark-money group used by Republican donors funneled millions of dollars toward high-profile conservative organizations that pushed and in some cases investigated claims of election fraud either before or after Joe Biden defeated President Donald Trump in November.

Many of these stances matched points that Trump and his team made as they attempted to undermine the election.

Almost all of the groups mentioned in this story denied to CNBC they were attempting to undermine the election with their own claims of fraud and voting irregularities. State and federal officials, including the former attorney general, have said there was no widespread election fraud during the 2020 presidential election.

That funding group, the Donors Trust, is officially labeled as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The designation allows financiers to give to the organization anonymously. That money is then channeled to other dark-money groups.

Among the recent pro-Trump groups that have received money from the Donors Trust are:

- pro-Trump students organization Turning Point USA
- an anti-immigration organization that has been labeled a hate group
- Project Veritas, a conservative outfit that specializes in "sting" videos
- a group founded by a man who pushed false conspiracy theories about former President Barack Obama

"A donor-advised fund account allows you to have charitable dollars ready to put into action on your own schedule. It works like a charitable savings account," the Donors Trust website says. Such associations are labeled as "dark money" because they do not publicly disclose their donors.

In 2019, the Donors Trust gave over $20 million to at least a dozen organizations that would go on to question the integrity of the election process, according to the group's 990 tax return. They have supported many of these organizations in prior years, as well. The 2020 filings won't be made available until later this year, so it is not yet clear whether Donors Trust gave money to these groups last year.

Donors Trust finished 2019 raising over $300 million, just under double the amount they raised the prior year. It gave a total of over $160 million in grants in 2019. The group's top anonymous donor gave over $150 million. Nonprofits often release their financial information a full year after their coverage dates.

In a lengthy statement to CNBC, Donors Trust CEO Lawson Bader said these organizations represent only a fraction of those seeing their donor funds and he condemns last week's violence in Washington.

"The grants described were made in 2019 for general operations. These listed organizations are but a few of the many hundreds of different public charities that Donors Trust account holders supported that same year," Bader said Tuesday. "Contributions made through a DonorsTrust DAF (Donor-Advised Funds) are made only to IRS recognized charitable and educational organizations. Donors Trust, like all donor-advised fund providers, does not make grants to 501(c)(4) organizations. Further, Donors Trust condemns violence of any kind. Espousing violence violates the ideas of personal responsibility and free exchange which we support wholly," he added.

"I was appalled by the actions taken by protestors last week to violate the Capitol building and physically threaten lawmakers. Whether against public or private property, such actions are not only offensive, dangerous and illegal, but damage an already fragile civic discourse and embarrass the reputation of the United States as a place where political transitions happen within the context of the Constitution."

Aligned with Trump

At least five people, including a Capitol police officer, died in connection to the riot, which happened after Trump and some of his closest allies led a rally urging supporters to fight to prevent Congress' declaration of Biden's victory.

Several pro-Trump groups were involved with planning the rally, which was held near the White House. Trump encouraged people who attended the rally to march on the U.S. Capitol. Critics, including several Republicans, accused him of inciting the violence. On Tuesday, Trump said the comments were "totally appropriate."

Groups with the same 501(c)(3) status as Donors Trust are prohibited under tax regulations from supporting specific candidates. However, they can skirt those rules by supporting and promoting policies that align with a particular politician. In the case of Trump-fueled unrest, several groups historically backed by Donors Trust money aligned themselves with Trump's false claims about widespread election fraud.

Turning Point USA, a nonprofit founded by staunch Trump ally Charlie Kirk, received over $850,000 from the Donors Trust. Kirk has continued to parrot the president's attacks on the election, falsely claiming Biden's victory was fraudulent.

"I will say it very bluntly. This election was stolen from President Trump. And the changes to the election, to the ballot questions, to the voter registration, to the access problems in these states" Kirk said in December.

Kirk's affiliated 501(c)(4) Turning Point Action was listed as a participant in last week's "March to Save America" rally, which preceded the attack on Capitol Hill. Prior to the rally, in a tweet he later deleted, Kirk said the group would be involved with sending over 80 buses to the rally. CNBC captured a screenshot of tweet before it was deleted.

Kirk recently said on his podcast that those from Turning Point got back on their buses and left following the conclusion of the rally.

A Turning Point Action spokesperson said the group did not include a march to the Capitol on its itinerary.

"Turning Point Action (TPA) did bus some students to the January 6th rally, which included a speech from the President of the United States. Following the president's remarks, TPA then bused those students immediately out of the area," the spokesperson said. "The march to the Capitol Building was never part of TPA's itinerary, nor did TPA encourage participation in the march. TPA's leadership condemns political violence and immediately did so as soon as news broke of the incident at the Capitol Building. "

The New York Times reported that the group ended up sending only seven buses to the rally from New Jersey, North Carolina and other locations.



Source: Twitter

Other connections

The 85 Fund, a group with ties to longtime Trump judicial advisor Leonard Leo, received over $10 million from the Donors Trust in 2019. According to a report by The Guardian and the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics, it was once known as The Judicial Education Project. It was run by Carrie Severino, who also is in charge of the Leo-affiliated Judicial Crisis Network. Severino's Judicial Crisis Network actively campaigned in support of Trump's nominees to the Supreme Court.

The Donors Trust lists an address for the 85 Fund in Washington that matches the address on The Judicial Education Project's 2018 990 form. Leo also told Axios that the 85 Fund would be one of the groups used to funnel millions of dollars into conservative battles around the country.

The Judicial Education Project, though, has another alias, according to the report: the Honest Elections Project. The organization claims to be nonpartisan and says that "through public engagement, advocacy, and public-interest litigation, the Honest Elections Project will defend the fair, reasonable, common sense measures that voters want in place to protect the integrity of the voting process."

A review of advertisements and litigation reveals that, in some cases, the group is aligned with claims about election fraud that are similar to Trump's. The group lists two Michigan-related lawsuits linked to Republicans that took place before the November election.

In September, The Detroit News reported on one of those lawsuits, which featured two former Republican secretaries of state. The former officials challenged Michigan's plan to count absentee ballots that are postmarked before Election Day but arrive up to 14 days afterward. Biden went on to win Michigan, even though an appeals court did rescind the 14-day extension of mail in ballots.

Fox News reported in June on another suit featuring the Honest Elections Project. In that case, a Republican named Tony Daunt claimed that Michigan voter registration rates in some counties are too high because their voting records have not been updated to remove ineligible voters, such as those who have died or convicted of crimes.

A leader of the Honest Elections Project told CNBC that the group concluded after the election that no widespread voter fraud occurred and they did not get involved with any post-election legal challenges. It also condemned the violence on Capitol Hill.

"HEP was created to make it easy to vote and hard to cheat. Before the election, HEP fought to preserve the rule of law as left-wing groups, including the Democratic Party, filed over 200 lawsuits to challenge existing election laws," Honest Elections Project executive director Jason Snead said in a statement. "After the election, HEP concluded that there was no widespread fraud and did not challenge or support any challenge to the results of the 2020 election. The violent insurrection at the Capitol was a heinous attack against democracy, the rule of law, and the election system HEP was created to defend."

Former U.S. Attorney General William Barr said in December that the Department of Justice has found no evidence of voter fraud.

The anti-immigration VDARE Foundation, which the Southern Poverty Law Center labeled a hate group, received just under $2 million from the Donors Trust in 2019. The foundation is run by Peter Brimelow, somebody the Southern Poverty Law Center says is a "leading anti-immigration activist."

Brimelow did not return a request for comment.

Since the riot last week, VDARE has become a platform for several writers standing with Trump and people who attended the rally.

"I believe Trump won the election and I believe that this matters," says an article on the foundation's site. The writer also says he believes the anti-fascist protesters and frequent Trump targets known as antifa were "amongst the crowd." Ken Kohl, a senior official in the D.C. U.S. Attorney's Office, recently said that investigators saw no indication of antifa being part of the riot.

Another writer on VDARE's site admitted to cheering on the Capitol invasion. "I'm going to open with a confession here: watching those protestors rampaging through the halls of Congress on Wednesday afternoon, there was a part of me that was cheering them on," the

article says.

Project Veritas, an activist group founded by investigator James O'Keefe, received over $4 million in 2019 from the Donors Trust. In August, The New Republic reported that Project Veritas was secretly moving ahead with sting operations that would "undermine the integrity of absentee and mail-in ballot counts."

Jered Ede, chief legal officer for Project Veritas, told CNBC that the group condemns the violence at the Capitol and pushed back on the idea their investigations are attempts to undermine the election. He also said Project Veritas has proved at least two instances of fraud and irregularities, including in New Hampshire and Texas.

"Project Veritas has been exposing voter fraud and election integrity stories for nearly a decade. We did so prior to 2020, we did so prior to 2019, we did so prior to Mr. Trump announcing his candidacy, and we will continue to do so for as long as we are around," Ede said in part of his lengthy responses to CNBC. "Neither our donors nor any politician control or direct what stories we cover. We have and will continue to cover these stories because voters deserve to know the truth and have faith in their electoral system."

Project Veritas pushed a Pennsylvania postal worker's claim about mail-in ballots that the Trump campaign would cite in a lawsuit that eventually went nowhere, according to The Washington Post.

The Center for Security Policy received over $800,000 from Donors Trust in 2019. It was founded by Frank Gaffney, who pushed conspiracy theories about President Barack Obama's administration and the Muslim Brotherhood. In the buildup to the riot, Gaffney questioned the results of the election.

Fred Fleitz, president of the Center for Security Policy, told CNBC late Tuesday that the group acknowledges that Biden is going to be the new president. He said Gaffney was no longer running the organization. The website lists Gaffney as executive chairman.

"Center for Security Policy accepts Joe Biden as the legal President of the United States," Fleitz said. "It's time to move on. We are an organization that is going to focus on holding Biden accountable when it comes to national security. Gaffney does not run the organization. He's not the president of the organization, I am," Fleitz added.

In a post on the group's website, Gaffney himself claimed in December the media is pushing a "false narrative" that "there's no evidence of electoral larceny in the 2020 presidential race — or at least none that would have made a difference," he said. Gaffney also wrote that "the online resource EveryLegalVote.com makes clear that election integrity was systematically compromised."

In January, a Center for Security Policy article claimed there are 10 truths about election fraud, including that election fraud has become "more sinister and sophisticated."

An article on Jan. 5, a day before the riot, is headlined "Exercising your First Amendment rights? How to avoid Antifa violence at the upcoming January 6th protests." Then article then goes on to give protesters tips on how to avoid fights with antifa.

Gaffney's own condemnation of the violence after the protest included him calling for a hearing that would show "evidence of electoral grand larceny."

The Gaffney posts disappeared off the group's website shortly after CNBC reached out for comment. CNBC has screenshots of the posts.

VIDEO3:0303:03

Watch a timeline of the U.S. Capitol siege that rocked America

News Videos

Capitol riots raise urgent concerns about Congress's information security

cnn.com/2021/01/07/tech/capitol-riots-cybersecurity/index.html

January 7, 2021



*(CNN Business)*Digital security experts are raising the alarm over Wednesday's breach of the US Capitol, which not only threatened lawmakers' physical safety but also created potential national security and intelligence risks, they say.

As rioters stormed the Capitol building, they broke into congressional offices, ransacked papers and in at least one case, stole a laptop, according to a video shared on Twitter by Sen. Jeff Merkley.

Merkley's office wasn't the only one robbed, according to authorities. On a call with reporters Thursday afternoon, US officials said multiple senators' offices were hit.

"This is probably going to take several days to flesh out exactly what happened, what was stolen, what wasn't," said Michael Sherwin, acting US attorney for the District of Columbia. "Items, electronic items, were stolen from senators' offices. Documents, materials, were stolen, and we have to identify what was done, mitigate that, and it could have potential national security equities. If there was damage, we don't know the extent of that yet."

There has already been some public confusion about what was taken, and . On Friday, Rep. Jim Clyburn told reporters on a call that his iPad had been stolen in the Capitol. Rachel Stein, a spokesperson for Clyburn, later clarified that the iPad had simply been moved by staffers for safety, and that other staffers hadn't known. And a laptop from House Speaker Nancy

Pelosi's office also went missing, Reuters said on Friday. Drew Hammill, a Pelosi spokesman, confirmed the theft but quickly added that the device was "only used for presentations."
Read More
The thefts — and fears thereof — raise questions about Congress's cybersecurity posture and whether US officials have done enough to secure their computing devices and networks from direct, physical access.
The incident highlights the grave cybersecurity risks that now face all lawmakers, congressional staffers, and any outside parties they may have communicated with in the course of business, security professionals say. Merkley sits on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which routinely discusses US global strategy and has oversight over the State Department.

It took an assault on Congress for Facebook and Twitter to draw a line on Trump
There is no evidence that the rioters' ranks included skilled hackers or motivated spies, and no indication so far of a data breach. But it is a danger that US Capitol Police and congressional IT administrators must now consider, said Kiersten Todt, managing director of the Cyber Readiness Institute.
"What you absolutely hope is that last night, after the looting and the invasion happened, that the congressional IT division was on top of things and taking inventory across all offices," Todt said, "checking to see which devices were accounted for, and which were not, and were able to wipe those devices clean immediately."
Spokespeople for the US Capitol Police and the House and Senate Sergeants At Arms did not return requests for comment.
As with remote hacking, physical access to a computer or mobile device can allow thieves to view emails, connect to networks and download important files without permission. But physical access threats are often considered even more dangerous, because they give hackers more options for compromising a device.

US intelligence agencies say massive hack of American government 'likely originated in Russia'
"There's a lot more you can do when you have physical proximity to a system," said Christopher Painter, a former top US cybersecurity official.
Attackers that have gained control of a laptop, for example, can plug in malware-laden USB drives, install or modify computer hardware, or make other surreptitious changes to a system they would not be able to accomplish from a distance.
Given the right level of access, even a casual attacker would be able to view congressional emails, shared fileservers and other system resources, said Ashkan Soltani, a security expert and former chief technologist at the Federal Trade Commission.
Even unclassified information can be damaging in the right contexts and in the wrong hands, Painter added.
Several current Senate staffers told CNN that while some IT protections exist across the organization, many decisions about information security practices are left up to individual lawmakers' offices.

Lawmakers and their staff use a potpourri of technology: iPhones, iPads, MacBooks, Android devices, Microsoft Surface tablets, and laptops from HP, Dell and Lenovo, to name a few, according to one of the staffers.
Congressional devices commonly have a tool known as Lookout installed, two of the staffers said. Lookout is a mobile security provider whose services include the ability to monitor for phishing, malware and network attacks on devices and can block connections to corporate resources if it detects a problem.
Mobile devices and laptops are generally password-protected, the staffers said. One of them said that, in his office, devices are set to lock themselves automatically after 30 minutes or sometimes less.

Federal law enforcement agencies push for arrests and charges after Wednesday's Capitol riot
Accessing certain applications, such as shared file storage systems and Skype, requires logging into a VPN, the staffers said. And logging onto the VPN also requires multi-factor authentication.
But a VPN is not required to access emails that have been downloaded to a mobile device, they said, and many staffers do not store their files behind multiple layers of protection.

"A lot of people just keep folders on their desktop -- not everyone uses their server storage," one staffer told CNN.

-- CNN's Kara Scannell contributed reporting.

Update: An earlier version of this story reported that Rep. Jim Clyburn said an iPad had been stolen from his office. A spokesperson later clarified that the iPad had been moved for safety and that there was confusion among staffers as to its whereabouts.

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 Brian Stelter and Oliver Darcy 

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Brian Stelter *here at 12:30am ET Saturday. Sorry I'm late. Trump has been deplatformed. Democrats have vowed to impeach him again. Multiple Republican lawmakers have supported the move. Biden has eleven more days to wait on the bench. This newsletter has a look ahead... but first, an important look back at Wednesday:*

It was even worse than it looked on live TV

News outlets are publishing more and more videos, photos and testimonials from the riot on Capitol Hill. And it's making me realize: **As heinous as the attack looked in real time, on live TV and in our social feeds, it was *even worse* than we knew at the time**. It was even more violent. It was even more treacherous. And Trump's behavior was even more disturbing.

On Wednesday we witnessed history through a handful of soda straws, to borrow a metaphor from the Iraq invasion of 2003. Journalists bravely covered the riot in real time on Wednesday and deserve enormous credit for doing so. But in the fog of chaos it was impossible to see the full picture in real time. We didn't find out that a U.S. Capitol Police officer was gravely wounded until Thursday, for example. **Brian D. Sicknick** died Thursday night.

On the inside on Wednesday afternoon, many Capitol Hill correspondents were locked down and shepherded to secure locations. On the outside, some reporters couldn't report live because wireless towers were overwhelmed. Some of the live shots on TV were from a distance, and the most important live shots of all -- inside the House and Senate chambers -- were turned off by the respective legislative bodies. A handful of chaotic videos on social media stunned the world, and immediately confirmed that the police had lost control, but the fuller videos that came out on Wednesday night and Thursday and Friday provided much more detail. Just now on CNN, **Don**

Lemon showed another appalling video of attackers trying to break into the Capitol -- another angle I hadn't seen yet. Sometimes audio clips of the assault are even scarier than video, as The Daily podcast demonstrated.

>> Think back to your own processing of Wednesday's events. Information came in bit by bit in ways that harkened back to 9/11. There was so much news that it was hard to process: Reports of explosive devices, an armed standoff, a shooting, an evacuation. Viewers were able to see some of it with their own eyes, but most of the info was secondhand, from tweets and phoners and pool reports. Only later did it become clear that lawmakers feared for their lives; that some of the attackers were hunting for congressional leaders; that there could have been a massacre.

>> *Something else that was even worse than we knew at the time:* The attacks against members of the media. **Erin Schaff** of The New York Times later described what happened when the mob saw her NYT ID. "They threw me to the floor, trying to take my cameras. I started screaming for help as loudly as I could," she said. "No one came. People just watched. At this point, I thought I could be killed and no one would stop them. They ripped one of my cameras away from me, broke a lens on the other and ran away." She fled and found a place to hide. Please read her full account here.

Elle Reeve's experience

Two days later, "I still feel the adrenaline," CNN correspondent **Elle Reeve** told me. Reeve covered the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville for Vice in 2017. When it comes to far-right extremism, she is one of the foremost reporters in the country. So I asked her to come on this week's Reliable Sources podcast and recount what she witnessed in DC. After the conversation, I felt like I finally understood what really happened on Wednesday. Here are a few key quotes from Reeve:

-- "**People say Donald Trump plus the Internet brings out the extremists. But I think the reality is an inversion of that: that Donald Trump plus the Internet brings extremism to the masses.** There are many more regular people now who believe extreme things -- who believe there's a secret cabal of pedophiles at the very top of the American government."

-- "These were regular people. These were not Internet basement dwellers. These are people with jobs... I don't think as a culture, we've grappled with the way **social media is a brainwashing machine**."

-- "Most of the people here do not think of themselves as white nationalists. Do not want to be seen as racist. I've interviewed a lot of them and they're like, 'We want nothing to do with those guys.' But that said, the parallels are, when this huge swarm of people who've been active online finally get to meet each other in person. And there's this thrill of it and it's very high energy -- but they've also been anonymous for so long -- it kind of relieves them of the responsibility for their actions."

-- The crowd's emotion was contagious: "**I don't think there are enough words in English to describe the way emotion works in a mob like that. It's like an electrical current. It's joy, but it's menacing.** And there's also this forward momentum that's just unstoppable."

-- "And because this was an older crowd," she said, "it was even all the more jarring. I mean, I think even on a basic level, you know, like what you learn as a kid, like respect your elders, it is shocking to see people who could be your parents scrambling over walls, acting crazy, acting immorally."

-- How much advance knowledge was there? Well, one of Reeve's sources (who she said is "prone to hyperbole") warned her ahead of time "that it was going to be dangerous and that I should stay away from the area."

-- "There's a lot of playing around with these radical ideas as jokes. And if someone pushes back on you, you can say, 'Well, it was just a joke. I don't want a civil war.' **But those seeds get planted in their minds.**"

-- "Most people I talked to said they expected Trump to be sworn in for a second term. Some people I talked to even said they expected military tribunals of Joe Biden and other Democrats for election fraud." Other attendees, she said, were much more reality-based.

-- Numerous individuals tried to intimidate Reeve and her crew: "They really see us as working in concert with Democrats to try to destroy the president. And **when you see us as an absolute enemy, you're able to justify a lot** of actions that I think, you know, the next day you'd be very embarrassed by."

Listen to the full podcast via Apple, Spotify, Stitcher, TuneIn, or your preferred app...

"TRUMP'S PRESIDENCY UNRAVELING"

That's what the banner on **"CNN Tonight"** said at 11pm ET Friday. WaPo's banner headline on Saturday says "More in Congress seek Trump ouster." The NYT's banner says "House prepares article of impeachment." **Nancy Pelosi** is signaling that Trump will be impeached by the Democratic-led House early next week -- unless he resigns. What do you think is more likely?



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HOUSE PREPARES ARTICLE OF IMPEACHMENT

Pelosi Says Trump Has to Go Now — He Maintains a Defiant Tone

This article is by Nicholas Fandos, Maggie Haberman and Luke Broadwater.

WASHINGTON — Democrats laid the groundwork on Friday for impeaching President Trump a second time, as Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California threatened to bring him up on formal charges if he did not resign "immediately" over his role in inciting a violent mob attack on the Capitol this week.

The threat was part of an all-out effort by furious Democrats, backed by a handful of Republicans, to pressure Mr. Trump to leave office in disgrace after the hourslong siege by his supporters on Wednesday on Capitol Hill. Although he has only 11 days left in the White House, they argued he was a direct danger to the nation.

Ms. Pelosi and other top Democratic leaders continued to press Vice President Mike Pence and the cabinet to invoke the 25th

At least one Republican, Senator Lisa Murkowski, Republican of Alaska, followed Ms. Pelosi's lead and told The Anchorage Daily News that she was considering leaving the Republican Party altogether because of Mr. Trump.

"I want him out," she said. "He has caused enough damage."

At the White House, Mr. Trump struck a defiant tone, insisting that he would remain a potent force in American politics as aides and allies abandoned him and his post-presidential prospects turned increasingly bleak. Behind closed doors, he made clear that he would not resign and expressed regret about releasing a video on Thursday committing to a peaceful transition of power and condemning the violence at the Capitol that he had egged on a day before.

He said on Twitter on Friday morning that he would not attend President-elect Joseph R. Biden

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FOR THE RECORD, PART ONE

-- **Lesley Stahl** taped an interview with Pelosi at the Capitol on Friday... It will form the basis of a "60 Minutes" segment on Sunday...

-- Trump is not currently scheduled to make any appearances on Fox or any other network, as far as I can tell...

-- **Chris Krebs**' warning on Friday night: "There is going to be violence in the run-up to the inauguration. This is not over. There will be more." (CNN)

-- **Graydon Carter's** Q: "Perhaps it's time to begin talking about how long an outgoing president can remain in office?" (Air Mail)

-- **WaPo** editorial board: "Trump must be held accountable for his inexcusable incitement, and prevented from further reckless ventures at home or abroad..." (WaPo)

-- Who is going to resign next? **Hope Hicks**? (CNN)

-- How much longer can this WH function with so many resignations and such a demoralized staff?

BANNED

Twitter finally did it: The company permanently banned Trump from its platform. If he tries to tweet from other accounts, Twitter will block him there, too. CNN's **Brian Fung** has a complete recap of the decision here. One has to wonder how this move is weighing on Trump's mental health. It has been hard to imagine him without Twitter -- but now it has happened. And I want to underscore this point: **This is the FIRST time any world leader has been banned, according to my sources at Twitter. The company's execs are concerned that the American president poses a threat to the public.** So they are intervening as a result. That's astonishing.

>> The ban applies to the man, not the account. So when Trump tried to post from @POTUS, Twitter made the tweets disappear. **Anderson Cooper** had the best reaction of all: "Brian, this is nuts. The President of the United States is trying to trick Twitter..."

>> Dem lawmaker **Jim Himes** on "AC360:" "His Twitter has been taken away, but what about the nuclear trigger?"

Fears of future violence

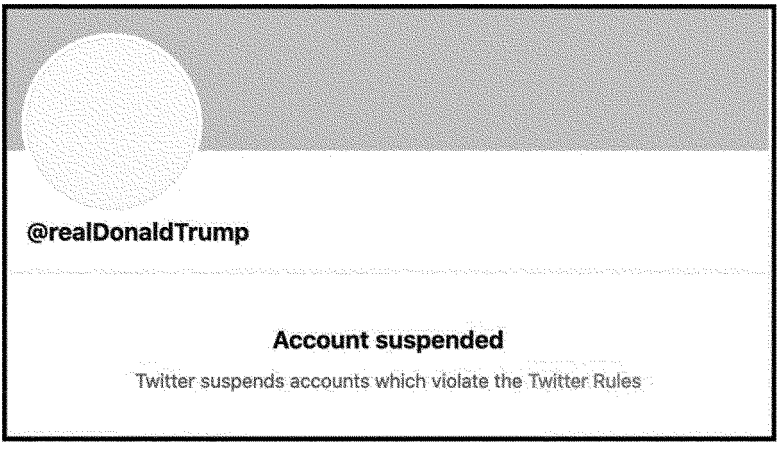
This part of Twitter's rationale for banning Trump is key: "Plans for future armed protests have already begun proliferating on and off-Twitter, including a proposed secondary attack on the US Capitol and state capitol buildings on January 17, 2021." For more on this, read CNN's latest, "Extremists intensify calls for violence ahead of Inauguration Day..."

How it's playing on the right

Oliver Darcy *writes:* "Twitter's ban of Trump is riling up his base — and conservatives in general — who have long argued that Big Tech is biased against them. Some are pointing out that leaders like the Iranian ayatollah have the ability to maintain accounts and use Twitter's services. **Tucker Carlson** opened his program by warning that 'the crackdown of America's civil liberties is coming.' Carlson argued that 'actions taken to suppress extremism will cause it.' His banner on the bottom of the screen read, 'CANCEL CULTURE RAGE MOBS WILL USE CAPITOL HILL RIOTS AS AN EXCUSE TO SILENCE ALL CONSERVATIVES.' **That, of course, is not true.** But I expect this story and that line of argument to absolutely dominate the right-wing media universe — **a media universe which is desperate to change the conversation away from Wednesday's pro-Trump riot**..."

>> *BTW:* Media Matters senior fellow **Matt Gertz** said "Trump has sent 1,375 tweets in response to things he saw on his television since September 1, 2018. Of those, 1,289 came in response to Fox

News or Fox Business." The last one, "which set his banning in motion," Gertz said, was in response to **Alyssa Farah**'s 9am appearance on Fox...



Where will Trump go next?

Trump is now unable to post on any of the major tech platforms. **He can, of course, release traditional press releases through the White House. He can hold a press conference or call into Fox at any time. And Trump's campaign has untold #'s of millions of email addresses and cell phone numbers.** But it seems likely he'll try to go find a new social media home. The most likely option seems to be **Parler**, which has become home to conservatives (and extremists) and marketed itself as a free-speech alternative to the Big Tech sites. The problem? It appears Parler is in extreme jeopardy of being banned itself:

App stores are cracking down on Parler

Oliver Darcy *writes:* "App stores are starting to crack down on Parler for leaving its platform unmoderated. The **Google Play** store removed the app on Friday until it starts moderating its policies, explaining that its 'longstanding policies' require 'enforcement that removes egregious content like posts that incite violence.' And **Apple** gave Parler a 24-hour ultimatum: clean up your platform or your app will be removed from the **App Store**. Per BuzzFeed, which first reported on Apple's ultimatum to Parler, Apple cited complaints that this week's insurrectionists had coordinated on the platform. Parler co-owner **Dan Bongino** said in a post that Apple's threat amounted to a

"destructive war on civil liberties." On Friday morning, Bongino had vowed to never tweet again, calling Twitter an "anti-American platform..."

>> ***Ro Khanna's*** *suggestion:* "Parler is hosted by Amazon Web services (AWS). Amazon should deny Parler services until Jan 21 unless they commit to removing all posts related to incitement of violence concerning inauguration. This will help prevent further violence and save lives..."

Flynn, Powell also banned

Twitter has *also* banned **Michael Flynn** and **Sidney Powell** as part of a separate crackdown on **QAnon**-aligned accounts. "We've been clear that we will take strong enforcement action on behavior that has the potential to lead to offline harm, and **given the renewed potential for violence surrounding this type of behavior in the coming days, we will permanently suspend accounts that are solely dedicated to sharing QAnon content,**" a Twitter spox explained...

Flashback to 2018...

Oliver Darcy *writes:* "I was thinking about when I was asking tech companies in 2018 about **Alex Jones** and **InfoWars** and why they were permitted on the platforms given brazen policy violations. All those platforms dug their heels in. Most didn't think they'd take action. How things have changed so much in just a few short years. **In many ways, the deplatforming of Trump has been similar to the deplatforming of Jones. Platforms twisted themselves into pretzels and read their own rules in funny ways to avoid this outcome -- all until there was a clear breaking point in which they could not defend inaction anymore.** In the case of Jones, one domino led to another domino which led to another domino which eventually led to him having no platform. Trump has now also traveled down that precise path..."

FOR THE RECORD, PART TWO

-- "**There's still silence directly from the president about the death of a Capitol police officer** in Wednesday's riot," **Maggie Haberman** pointed out. "Presumably the @potus account could tweet that..." (Twitter)

-- **Jake Tapper** wrote: "Lotta people who helped incite a riot that led to loss of human life including a police officer have spent the day whining about losing twitter followers, about social media bias,

about Biden invoking Goebbels when referring to 'the Big Lie' ... haven't seen anything about deaths." (Twitter)

-- **Charlie Warzel's** Q's: "What does this mean for Mr. Trump's future? Can a disgraced president addicted to outrage and innately governed by the same forces as the attention economy survive without his primary outlet?" (NYT)

-- **Steve Bannon's "War Room"** podcast channel was booted from **YouTube** after it racked up three strikes on the platform in the last 90 days... (Independent)

-- "**Facebook**, **Twitter**, and **YouTube** have spent years fomenting and enabling yesterday's violence at the Capitol. Policymakers need to do something about it," **Roger McNamee** writes... (Wired)

Local editorial writers are also calling for Trump's removal

On top of the scathing editorials by the WSJ and other national outlets, many local publications have published opinion pieces advocating for Trump's removal from office. Here are just some of the headlines, compiled by **Kerry Flynn**:

>> *Baltimore Sun:* "Trump must go: Congress or his Cabinet must remove him from office before he injures another American..."

>> *Capital Gazette:* "Disgrace in Washington makes it clear. Invoke the 25th Amendment and remove Donald Trump from office..."

>> *Chicago Tribune:* "Concede or resign, President Trump..."

>> *Miami Herald:* "Trump is deranged, dangerous and 'incapacitated.' Invoke the 25th Amendment and remove him from office..."

>> *South Florida Sun Sentinel:* "Invoke the 25th Amendment: Donald Trump forfeited his moral authority to stay in office..."

>> *Syracuse.com:* "Trump is unfit to lead. Remove him now..."

Sunday on "Reliable Sources"

On Sunday I will be joined by **Jeffrey Goldberg, Susan Glasser, Julie Roginsky, Alex Stamos**, and four of CNN's best: **Alexander Marquardt, Manu Raju, Lauren Fox, and Phil Mattingly**. *See you at 11am ET on CNN...*

FOR THE RECORD, PART THREE

-- **David Zurawik** writes: "In our post-mortems about who has blood on their hands besides the president, we need to go beyond Republican politicians like Texas **Sen. Ted Cruz** and Missouri **Sen. Josh Hawley** ... and take a hard-eyed look at right-wing media and the role it played in the rise of Trump and the fall of the Capitol to his followers Wednesday..." (Baltimore Sun)

-- **Sean Illing**'s latest about misinfo is well worth a read: "The fantasy-industrial complex gave us the Capitol Hill insurrection..." (Vox)

-- "**Fox News** can't seem to figure out why Trump voters are scared and confused," **Philip Bump** wryly writes... (WaPo)

-- *A must-watch:* CNN's **Brianna Keilar** blasted **Tucker Carlson** as a "propagandist," a "liar," and a "parasite..." (Mediaite)

-- "For the moment, little of the pressure that has been applied to tech companies has been leveled at TV companies like **Comcast** and **Verizon**," **Alex Shepard** points out, echoing Darcy's newsletter lead from last night. "Tech companies are under fire ... But **on cable news and right-wing radio, nothing has changed**..." (TNR)

-- *To that point:* "While cable co's don't share all the same issues as social platforms, it *is* striking that they've been let *entirely* off the hook for beaming stations like **OAN** and **Newsmax** to millions — so much so that they don't even feel the need to respond," **Will Oremus** notes... (Twitter)

-- **Andrew Tyndall** offered his thoughts to **Jay Rosen** on what motivates TV providers to carry these far-right channels... (Twitter)

"I could move your audience in a heartbeat"

According to VF's **Gabriel Sherman**, Trump excoriated **Newsmax** boss **Chris Ruddy** for referring to Biden as president-elect. "You're weak-kneed," Trump reportedly said, warning, "I could move your audience in a heartbeat." Ruddy declined to comment to Sherman directly on the matter, but said that although Trump "isn't always happy with my take on things, he knows I am acting out of goodwill towards him." Ruddy added, "The truth is he has promoted Newsmax very little during his term in office." That's true in the larger context of his presidency. But it is hard to imagine that Newsmax's current success isn't directly tied to Trump encouraging his fans to watch in the past few months...

A Frankenstein *he helped create*

Oliver Darcy *writes:* "**Brian Kilmeade** on Friday, citing a recent poll, expressed dismay that so many Republicans support supported the actions of the mob who laid siege to Capitol Hill. 'That to me is scary,' Kilmeade said, adding that 'no one can approve those actions.' Kilmeade is right. But **if he wants to understand why so many Republicans feel that way, he should consider looking in the mirror.** For years he and his network have run cover for and excused the inexcusable actions of a President who has fanned the flames of division and hatred. And now, when the natural consequences of it has played out for the world to see, he's horrified? Give me a break..."

FOR THE RECORD, PART FOUR

-- *Keep a close eye on this:* **Dominion** has officially sued **Sidney Powell** for her "defamatory media campaign." The company is seeking $1.3 billion in damages... (CNN)

-- "In an interview, Dominion CEO **John Poulos** said the lawsuit aims to clear his company's name through a full airing of the facts about the 2020 election," **Emma Brown** wrote... (WaPo)

-- Speaking of pro-Trump lies and conspiracy theories, "the FBI told reporters Friday there's 'no indication' that Antifa disguised themselves as Trump supporters to join the ranks of the mob..." (CNN)

-- **Bill Carter** writes: "Business leaders like Zuckerberg, Dorsey and Murdoch should be ashamed for enabling Trump..." (CNN)

-- RTDNA director **Dan Shelley**: "To journalists, I want you to know your work matters and your role in our democracy is vital. Your safety and well-being matter, too. Take care of yourselves and each other. Stay safe. We've got your backs. So don't back down." (RTDNA)

Thursday ratings

Television news ratings remained much higher than usual on Thursday as viewers sought info about the aftermath of the Capitol riot. According to TVNewser, 3.85 million people were watching CNN at any given time of day on Thursday, an off-the-charts number by cable news standards. About 3.3 million were watching MSNBC throughout the day, and about 1.9 million were watching Fox News. Viewership levels for Fox continue to be much lower than expected, given the network's top-rated status up until election day. Perhaps Thursday's ratings are another sign that Trump fans feels demoralized...

FOR THE RECORD, PART FIVE

-- In any other news environment, this would be the lead story: "The US reported more Covid-19 cases and deaths in the last week than any previous seven days during the pandemic, data showed Friday morning. And more than 4,080 US coronavirus deaths were reported on Thursday alone -- the most ever reported in a single day during the pandemic..." (CNN)

-- **Sunny Hostin** revealed on Friday that both of her in-laws died of the coronavirus: "It is not a joke, it is not a hoax..." (Page Six)

-- "White House warned governors about 'USA variant' of Covid-19, but no such discovery has been made..." (CNN)

IN OTHER NEWS...

The Blade's byline strike

"Reporters at the Toledo Blade and Pittsburgh Post-Gazette said Friday that the right-wing views of the papers' owners are hindering their ability to accurately cover President Donald Trump and

Wednesday's Capitol riot," TheWrap's Lindsey Ellefson wrote Friday.

Kerry Flynn *emails:* "The **Toledo NewsGuild**, the union of the Toledo-based newspaper The Blade, tweeted Thursday that they began a byline strike after management 'manipulated wording in headlines, stories, and photo captions to alter the reality of what occurred during the insurrection at the Capitol.' In a press conference over Zoom Friday, The Blade's **Nolan Rosenkrans** said, 'Our goal is to send a message to our communities that we're as shocked as they are... The Block family has the reputation for slanting coverage on the things they care about.' In this case, Trump."

>> Block Communications EVP and CFO **Jodi Miehls**, EVP + CFO denied the union's allegations in a statement Friday...

VOA whistleblowers protest Pompeo address

Oliver Darcy *writes:* "Staffers at **VOA** are blowing the whistle on a planned address **Mike Pompeo** is scheduled to deliver Monday at the organization's HQ. A letter posted by the **Government Accountability Project** said the speech would break the law, given the firewall aimed at protecting VOA journalists from politics. 'The statutory firewall protects VOA journalists and editors from outside political meddling,' the letter explained. Additionally, the letter said, staffers are worried an indoor speech before a live audience of VOA employees carried a risk of spreading the coronavirus. A **State Department** spox didn't respond to my request for comment..."

More SPAC talks

Kerry Flynn *emails:* "Everyone is talking about SPACs. **Reuters** on Friday reported that **Bustle Digital Group** is 'exploring a potential merger with blank-check acquisition companies which would take it public,' citing a person familiar with the matter. That person said BDG is seeking a valuation of at least $600M. **The Information** reported that **BuzzFeed** 'has held discussions with at least one special purpose acquisition company, **Spencer Rascoff's Supernova Partners Acquisition Co**' and also reported that **Vox Media** is looking to raise money either through private fundraising or by going public. After a year of economic fallout and downsizing in media, it's positive to see these companies explore ways to grow. But let's not forget the tens of thousands of jobs lost last year and the journalists still looking for work in a time when we need more quality news and information..."

Alex Trebek's final episode

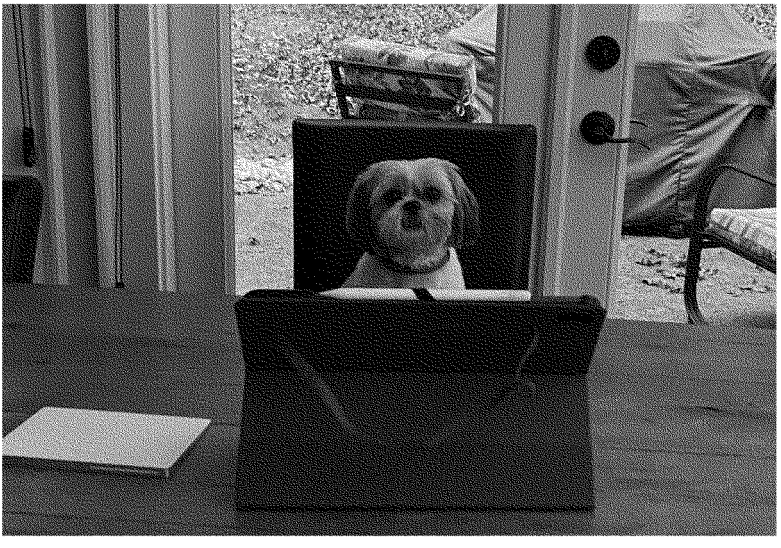
CNN's ***Leah Asmelash*** *writes:* "'Jeopardy!' had a simple message ahead of the broadcast of the very last episode featuring the legendary **Alex Trebek**: Thank you. In a tweet on Friday evening, the show posted a tribute video to Trebek, who hosted the show for 37 seasons and passed away in November. This week was the last week of new episodes still featuring Trebek. The episodes were filmed in October." Watch the tribute here.

"On Monday," Asmelash notes, "the new season of 'Jeopardy!' will air, the first without Trebek."

SAVING THE BEST FOR LAST...

Pet of the day

Timothy shares a photo that proves we have ***all*** *been glued to our screens this week:*



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Hope you can breathe a sigh of relief this weekend. We will be back on Sunday night unless the news warrants a Saturday night edition. Email us anytime...

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Proud Boys flock to Washington 'incognito' for Jan. 6 protests

foxnews.com/politics/proud-boys-flock-capitol-incognito-jan-6-protests



close



Video

Fox News Flash top headlines for Jan. 2

Fox News Flash top headlines are here. Check out what's clicking on Foxnews.com.

The far-right, male-only group, the Proud Boys, will descend onto Washington, D.C., in protest the same day Congress plans to certify Electoral College votes, officially confirming President-elect Joe Biden's win.

Though the group will not wear its usual black and yellow colors Jan.6, the Washington Times first reported that the leader of the group, Enrique Tarrio, said members would dress "incognito," in Antifa's traditional all-black apparel.

GOP LAWMAKERS REJECT GOP PUSH TO OBJECT TO ELECTORAL COLLEGE RESULTS

"We will spread across downtown DC in smaller teams," Tarrio wrote on the social media platform, Parler.

"And who knows....we might dress in all BLACK for the occasion," he added.

Congress is expected to certify the election's results, despite several GOP lawmakers saying they will object to certain state's votes if an emergency 10-day audit is not first completed.

The calls to object have been spearheaded by Sens. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Josh Hawley, R-Mo., and are based on allegations of voter fraud and changes states made to mail-in voting rules during the coronavirus pandemic.

President Trump has continued to allege voter fraud related to mail-in voting, but the Supreme Court has refused two cases from the Trump campaign, and more than 50 lawsuits have been dismissed in lower courts across the nation.

Polls still show, however, that many Republican voters believe the election was "rigged."

Trump in turn has urged supporters to protest the Jan. 6 Senate vote. He has tweeted out rally details and prompted numerous groups to meet in D.C. to pressure Republicans to object to the Electoral College vote.

"The BIG Protest Rally in Washington, D.C., will take place at 11.00 A.M. on January 6th," Trump said Friday. "Locational details to follow. StopTheSteal!"

The Proud Boys made headlines last summer, clashing with Antifa and Black Lives Matter protesters in the aftermath of George Floyd's death while in police custody in Minneapolis.

Some protests across the country turned violent and demonstrations continued for months. Following the election, pro-Trump supporters launched Stop the Steal protests fueled by the president's continued claims that the election was "stolen" from him.

MAYHEM IN WASHINGTON, DC, AS TRUMP SUPPORTERS, ANTIFA CLASH; AT LEAST 4 STABBED, 23 ARRESTED

Last month, four people were stabbed and 33 arrested after pro-Trump supporters clashed with counterprotesters in the nation's capital as people gathered in front of the Supreme Court and at Freedom Plaza.

Videos surfaced showing D.C. police attempting to control Proud Boys and Antifa fights across the city, resulting in the hospitalization of at least two police officers.

At least four protests are planned on Jan. 6 by different pro-Trump groups, including by Women for America First, and the Eighty Percent Coalition – a new group formed following reports that the majority of Republicans think the election was "rigged."

Threats of violence, and plans to bring firearms into the District and set up an "armed encampment" on the Mall have surfaced in online forums, reported The Washington Post.

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The Metropolitan Police Department announced road closures from Jan. 5-7 in anticipation of the protests and said vehicles will be restricted for "public safety."

The department also reminded the public Thursday that carrying a firearm "within 1,000 feet of any First Amendment activity," including "members of the public who have been issued a Concealed Carry Permit in the District of Columbia," is strictly prohibited.

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Capitol Police intelligence report warned three days before attack that 'Congress itself' could be targeted

By **Carol D. Leonnig**

Jan. 15, 2021 at 7:43 p.m. EST

Three days before thousands of rioters converged on the U.S. Capitol, an internal Capitol Police intelligence report warned of a violent scenario in which "Congress itself" could be the target of angry supporters of President Trump on Jan. 6, laying out a stark alert that deepens questions about the security failures that day.

In a 12-page report on Jan. 3, the intelligence unit of the congressional police force described how thousands of enraged protesters, egged on by Trump and flanked by white supremacists and extreme militia groups, were likely to stream into Washington armed for battle.

This time, the focus of their ire would be members of Congress, the report said.

"Supporters of the current president see January 6, 2021, as the last opportunity to overturn the results of the presidential election," according to the memo, portions of which were obtained by The Washington Post. "This sense of desperation and disappointment may lead to more of an incentive to become violent. Unlike previous post-election protests, the targets of the pro-Trump supporters are not necessarily the counter-protesters as they were previously, but rather Congress itself is the target on the 6th."

The internal report — which does not appear to have been shared widely with other law enforcement agencies, including the FBI — was among a number of flags that security experts say should have alerted officials to the high security risks on Jan. 6.

A day before the attack, an FBI office in Virginia issued an explicit warning that some extremists were preparing to travel to Washington and threatening to commit violence and "war." And dozens of people on a terrorist watch list were in D.C. the day of the riot, including many suspected white supremacists, as The Post previously reported.

On Friday, the inspectors general of four federal agencies announced that they will investigate how security officials prepared for and responded to the pro-Trump rally that preceded the attack on the Capitol.

Two people familiar with the Capitol Police intelligence memo, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe security preparations, said the report was conveyed to all Capitol Police command staff by the intelligence unit's director, Jack Donohue. Another law enforcement official said the report prompted the Capitol Police chief to seek the emergency activation of the National Guard and led the department to place its perimeter barricades farther from the Capitol than during past events.

Capitol Police spokeswoman Eva Malecki declined to comment on the intelligence report's contents or how it was used to plan security for the protests that day.

Former Capitol Police chief Steven Sund, who resigned in the wake of the siege, said in an interview Friday that it would be inappropriate to publicly discuss an internal intelligence memo, given its sensitive nature and the risk of revealing sources and methods. But he said he was familiar with the department's intelligence reports, which he said guided security planning.

Sund previously told The Post in an interview Sunday that in the days immediately preceding the attack, he grew concerned that additional security measures were needed. He asked top congressional security officials for permission to declare an emergency and activate the National Guard, a request he said they rebuffed.

"We looked at the intelligence," he said. "We knew we would have large crowds, the potential for some violent altercations. I had nothing indicating we would have a large mob seize the Capitol."

Nevertheless, the Jan. 3 intelligence report produced by his former agency includes chilling descriptions of the ferocity of the combat that activists appeared to be planning on forums where white supremacists and followers of the alt-right movement gather — presaging the mayhem days later.

The report said organizers were urging Trump supporters to come armed with guns and to bring specialized combat gear — including gas masks and military-style bulletproof vests called "plate carriers" — to Washington on Jan. 6.

The memo concluded that Jan. 6 was shaping up to potentially be a perfect storm of danger because of the size of the expected crowds, the urgency of the group's mission, the call for demonstrators to bring lethal weapons, the location of the two largest protests in proximity to the Capitol grounds and the fact that "both have been promoted by President Trump himself."

"The Stop the Steal protest in particular does not have a permit, but several high profile speakers, including Members of Congress are expected to speak at the event," the document stated. "This combined with Stop the Steal's propensity to attract white supremacists, militia members and others who actively promote violence, may lead to a significantly dangerous situation for law enforcement and the general public alike."

Two people familiar with the report said it was not shared widely outside the police force.

An FBI official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because the agency has a policy of not discussing internal intelligence products, said, "At this time, it does not appear such a product was ever shared with the FBI through the normal intelligence sharing channels."

A D.C. police official did not immediately respond to questions Friday about whether the agency was aware of the report.

On Jan. 4, the day after the intelligence unit shared its warning and conclusions with more than a dozen Capitol Police command staff members, Sund said he asked the Senate and House sergeants at arms for permission to put the National Guard on emergency standby.

Sund said House Sergeant at Arms Paul Irving and Senate Sergeant at Arms Michael Stenger rejected that idea and suggested he instead informally seek out his Guard contacts, asking them to "lean forward" and be on alert in case Capitol Police needed help.

Irving has not responded to requests for comment, and Stenger has declined to comment.

On the day of the attack, Sund said, he urgently renewed the request for emergency National Guard support after a mob broke through the Capitol barricades around 1 p.m. The minutes ticked by as the sergeants at arms sought approval from congressional leadership. The initial wave of the military reinforcements would not arrive for more than four hours — at 5:40 p.m.

The Capitol Police intelligence report was a collaborative product of its intelligence division, led by Donohue, a national expert on the rise of radicalization and violence among extremist groups and domestic terrorists who was recently hired by the department.

Donohue did not respond to requests for comment.

He took over in November as head of the Capitol Police's Intelligence and Information Coordination Division, just as the force was preparing for a string of pro-Trump rallies. He previously worked for five years as a chief at the New York Police Department, helping oversee the force's intelligence bureau, whose detectives and analysts deploy intelligence to disrupt criminal and terrorist plots. After 32 years with the NYPD, Donohue worked briefly as a private consultant.

In July 2020, Donohue testified before the House Homeland Security subcommittee on intelligence and counterterrorism about how social media was being used to radicalize and foment violence in right-wing and left-wing extremist groups. He warned about the increasingly incendiary nature of events billed as free-speech protests and extremists' attempts to harm government officials and police in their calls for insurrection.

When "protesters arrive intent on violence or occupation and are carrying semiautomatic weapons, the stakes grow exponentially," Donohue told the committee, adding, "Law enforcement must remain vigilant in identifying before they act, but the time frame may be remarkably short."

Mary McCord, former acting assistant attorney general for national security, said the lack of more robust security around the Capitol on Jan. 6 has been "a complete mystery to me," but she said the Capitol Police's handling of its own intelligence was even more disturbing.

"It needs to be investigated," said McCord, who is a fellow in a George Washington University program on extremism and a leader of Georgetown's center on constitutional law. "It could be those who received the report were under pressure to handle this a certain way. It could mean that there were inherent biases, where people discounted this, and just didn't think a large group of White conservatives who generally ally with the police and the GOP lawmakers, who were also present there that day, would be violent."

One law enforcement official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the ongoing investigation of the security failures, said the report was viewed internally as predicting something the Capitol Police had already experienced at smaller pro-Trump rallies in November and December: some militia members interspersed among the protesters, and the likelihood of a few violent skirmishes breaking out. It did not signal a thousands-strong army storming the Capitol doors, the official said.

Meanwhile, an FBI internal report prepared the day before the attack by a field office in Norfolk described an online thread indicating that extremists were planning to travel to D.C. for "war."

That document was shared with the field office in Washington, which — within 40 minutes — briefed officials in a command post there set up to respond to possible problems stemming from the rally, said FBI Assistant Director in

Charge Steven M. D'Antuono. It was also shared through a Joint Terrorism Task Force that includes representatives from the Capitol Police and other law enforcement agencies, D'Antuono said, though precisely who saw it remains unclear.

Officials said FBI Director Christopher A. Wray and acting attorney general Jeffrey Rosen were not briefed on the document in particular because it was considered a raw intelligence product, and investigators had not identified those responsible for the posts. But, the officials said, Wray was briefed in advance more broadly regarding online chatter about violence, as well as information from the FBI's sources about possible extremists intending to travel to the Capitol.

Officials have said FBI agents visited some of those extremists to discourage them from traveling. But the bureau did not take other steps — such as issuing a formal threat assessment to law enforcement — that might have raised the level of alarm.

FBI officials have said it is difficult to distinguish cheap talk from actual threats online, where the volume of incendiary posts is astronomical. "One of the real challenges in this space is trying to distinguish what's aspirational vs. what's intentional," Wray said at a briefing Thursday.

Matt Zapotosky, Peter Hermann and Julie Tate contributed to this report.

Updated January 16, 2021

Complete coverage: Pro-Trump mob storms Capitol building

Security

Live updates: National Guard on alert for armed far-right and white supremacist groups at state capitals, D.C.

Arrests: Here are some of the people charged

What happened on Jan. 6

Police turning in police: Off-duty police were part of the Capitol mob

Exclusive: Capitol Police intelligence report warned three days before attack that 'Congress itself' could be targeted

Attacked with bear spray and their own batons: D.C. police describe brutal and chaotic moments

U.S. Capitol riot, a Black Lives Matter protest: A visual comparison of two starkly different policing responses

Trump's second impeachment

Unprecedented: House hands Trump a second impeachment, this time with GOP support

Senate impeachment whip count: Where Democrats and Republicans stand

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Michigan attorney general ponders criminal probes of state and local officials who bend to Trump's will on overturning election results

By **Carol D. Leonnig** and **Tom Hamburger**

November 21, 2020 at 12:17 p.m. EST

Michigan's attorney general is exploring whether officials there risk committing crimes if they bend to President Trump's wishes in seeking to block the certification of Joe Biden's victory in their state, according to two people familiar with the review.

The move by Dana Nessel, a Democrat, reflected a growing sense of unease among many in her party and some Republicans that the president was continuing his unprecedented efforts to reach personally into the state's electoral process as he seeks to prevent Michigan from formally declaring a winner there.

On Wednesday, two Republican officials in Wayne County sought to rescind their vote to certify the election results in their county, where Detroit is located, after Trump called them Tuesday night.

On Friday afternoon, four leaders of Michigan's Republican-controlled state legislature met with Trump in the White House at his invitation.

Tensions surrounding the White House encounter seemed to ease somewhat late Friday when there were signs the lawmakers would not side with Trump.

No details of the meeting were available late Friday. But the lawmakers issued a statement saying that they "have not yet been made aware of any information that would change the outcome of the election in Michigan and as legislative leaders, we will follow the law and follow the normal process regarding Michigan's electors, just as we have said throughout this election."

A spokesperson for Nessel declined to comment for this article.

The attorney general is conferring with election law experts on whether officials may have violated any state laws prohibiting them from engaging in bribery, perjury and conspiracy, according to people familiar with the deliberations who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter.

Biden won enough states to secure 306 electoral college votes to Trump's 232. In Michigan, Biden led Trump by more than 150,000 votes.

In the wake of Biden being declared president-elect on Nov. 7, the Trump campaign initially sought to file several legal challenges claiming the results were tainted by fraudulent ballots and widespread election fraud. But the campaign repeatedly lost those court cases for lack of evidence for its claims. In the past week, Trump and his allies have shifted

their efforts to attempting to block the certification of results in several states, including Michigan.

That included Trump speaking by phone Tuesday with Monica Palmer, a member of the Wayne County Board of Canvassers, after she and her Republican colleague William Hartmann reluctantly agreed to certify the county's election tally. After the call, the next day, she and Hartmann reversed course, seeking to rescind their vote to certify. The Michigan secretary of state's office, which oversees elections, said Thursday that there is no legal mechanism for Palmer and Hartmann to do so.

Palmer said Trump did not pressure her and mostly wanted to check on her safety, but it was hard to describe everything that was said in the call due to "adrenaline" and "stress."

Palmer and Hartmann each signed affidavits saying they were misled into believing that if they voted for certification, there would be a rigorous audit of the ballot-counting process.

Under Michigan's perjury law, the attorney general could prosecute an election official who provided false information in an affidavit submitted to the county and state election boards. A perjury conviction carries a maximum five-year sentence in Michigan.

Palmer denied any wrongdoing, saying that she accepted no favors nor benefits from the president and his allies and had been entirely truthful in her affidavit.

More important she stressed she was doing her job, and doing it diligently. She said she disagrees with repeated suggestions from some Democrats that board members are required to certify the vote.

"They are suggesting I don't have discretion on whether to certify," she said, calling the notion ridiculous. "What's the point" of having a canvas board review if it is only a rubber stamp? she asked.

Hartmann's lawyer, Mark Mandell, accused Nessel "of using my client as a patsy in a hyper-sensitive political environment."

The Friday visit to the White House by Michigan lawmakers offered no signs that Trump's pressure campaign would result in any legislative action to overturn the election.

Mike Shirkey, leader of the Michigan Senate, and Lee Chatfield, speaker of the state House, joined Trump along with two other Michigan Republicans, Tom Barrett, a state senator, and state Rep. Jason Wentworth.

Chatfield and Shirkey issued a statement afterward that they had delivered a letter seeking more aid for their state's battle against the coronavirus pandemic. They notably did not back up Trump's claims that there was evidence of rampant fraud in Michigan, but stressed that any fraud allegations should be probed.

"Michigan's certification process should be a deliberate process free from threats and intimidation," they said. "Allegations of fraudulent behavior should be taken seriously, thoroughly investigated, and if proven, prosecuted to the full extent of the law. And the candidates who win the most votes win elections and Michigan's electoral votes. These are simple truths that should provide confidence in our elections."

Chatfield said in a tweet Friday that he has nothing to apologize for in meeting with Trump. "No matter the party, when you have an opportunity to meet with the President of the United States, of course you take it. I won't apologize for that. In fact, I'm honored to speak with POTUS and proud to meet with him."

Trump's critics have said the president's actions appear on their face to be an improper and possibly illegal abuse of his presidential power.

Just before Trump's meeting with Michigan Republicans, Biden legal adviser Bob Bauer blasted Trump for hosting the meeting.

"It's an abuse of office," Bauer told reporters Friday. "It's an open attempt to intimidate election officials. It's absolutely appalling."

Longtime Republican elections lawyer Benjamin Ginsberg, a vocal critic of Trump's efforts to reverse the election outcome, was initially dubious about the potential legal culpability of the state lawmakers who met with Trump. "I don't know of anything in the law that would stop state legislators from going to the White House," he said. "That doesn't mean it's not cringeworthy." Still, Ginsberg said, Trump's efforts to influence the count in Michigan could have the effect of disenfranchising Michigan voters. "That is wrong," he said.

Nessel has been aggressive in prosecuting public integrity crimes in the state since her arrival last year, and has pressed forward with charges against fairly low-level public officials. Several have been Democrats, including a county clerk charged with election law violations.

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The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Outgoing Capitol Police chief: House, Senate security officials hamstrung efforts to call in National Guard

By **Carol D. Leonnig**, **Aaron C. Davis**, **Peter Hermann** and **Karoun Demirjian**

Jan. 10, 2021 at 11:38 p.m. EST

Two days before Congress was set to formalize President-elect Joe Biden's victory, Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund was growing increasingly worried about the size of the pro-Trump crowds expected to stream into Washington in protest.

To be on the safe side, Sund asked House and Senate security officials for permission to request that the D.C. National Guard be placed on standby in case he needed quick backup.

But, Sund said Sunday, they turned him down.

In his first interview since pro-Trump rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol last week, Sund, who has since resigned his post, said his supervisors were reluctant to take formal steps to put the Guard on call even as police intelligence suggested that the crowd President Trump had invited to Washington to protest his defeat probably would be much larger than earlier demonstrations.

House Sergeant at Arms Paul Irving said he wasn't comfortable with the "optics" of formally declaring an emergency ahead of the demonstration, Sund said. Meanwhile, Senate Sergeant at Arms Michael Stenger suggested that Sund should informally seek out his Guard contacts, asking them to "lean forward" and be on alert in case Capitol Police needed their help.

Irving could not be reached for comment. A cellphone number listed in his name has not accepted messages since Wednesday. Messages left at a residence he owns in Nevada were not immediately returned, and there was no answer Sunday evening at a Watergate apartment listed in his name. A neighbor said he had recently moved out.

Stenger declined Sunday to comment when a reporter visited his Virginia home. "I really don't want to talk about it," he said.

It was the first of six times Sund's request for help was rejected or delayed, he said. Two days later on Wednesday afternoon, his forces already in the midst of crisis, Sund said he pleaded for help five more times as a scene far more dire than he had ever imagined unfolded on the historic Capitol grounds.

An army of 8,000 pro-Trump demonstrators streamed down Pennsylvania Avenue after hearing Trump speak near the White House. Sund's outer perimeter on the Capitol's west side was breached within 15 minutes. With 1,400 Capitol Police officers on duty, his forces were quickly overrun.

"If we would have had the National Guard we could have held them at bay longer, until more officers from our partner

agencies could arrive," he said.

Just before 2 p.m., the pro-Trump mob entered the Capitol, sending lawmakers and staff scrambling for safety. D.C. police had quickly dispatched hundreds of officers to the scene. But it wasn't enough. At 2:26 p.m., Sund said, he joined a conference call to the Pentagon to plead for additional backup.

"I am making an urgent, urgent immediate request for National Guard assistance," Sund recalled saying. "I have got to get boots on the ground."

On the call were several officials from the D.C. government, as well as officials from the Pentagon, including Lt. Gen. Walter E. Piatt, director of the Army Staff. The D.C. contingent was flabbergasted to hear Piatt say that he could not recommend that his boss, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, approve the request.

"I don't like the visual of the National Guard standing a police line with the Capitol in the background," Piatt said, according to Sund and others on the call.

Again and again, Sund said, "The situation is dire," recalled John Falcicchio, the chief of staff for D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser. "Literally, this guy is on the phone, I mean, crying out for help. It's burned in my memories."

Pentagon officials have emphasized that the Capitol Police did not ask for D.C. Guard backup ahead of the event or request to put a riot contingency plan in place with guardsmen at the ready, and then made an urgent request as rioters were about to breach the building, even though the Guard isn't set up to be a quick-reaction force like the police.

"We rely on Capitol Police and federal law enforcement to provide an assessment of the situation," Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said during a news conference last week. "And based on that assessment that they had, they believed they had sufficient personnel and did not make a request."

Despite Sund's pleas, the first National Guard personnel didn't arrive at the Capitol until 5:40 p.m. — after four people had died and the worst was long over.

Sund, 55, offered his resignation the next day, telling friends he felt he had let his officers down. Many lawmakers, infuriated by the breach and angry that they had been unable to reach Sund at the height of the crisis, were only too happy to accept it.

Under pressure from lawmakers, Stenger and Irving also resigned.

In a wide-ranging interview, Sund sought to defend his officers, who, he said, had fought valiantly. And with threats of violence looming ahead of Biden's Jan. 20 inauguration, he said he remains worried.

"My concern is if they don't get their act together with physical security, it's going to happen again," he said.

As he prepared for last week's demonstrations, Sund drew on decades of experience. Hired as chief in 2019, two years after joining the Capitol Police, he worked for 23 years on the D.C. police force, leaving as commander of the Special Operations Division. Widely respected in the District and among leaders of U.S. Secret Service and Park Police, he had helped to run 12 national security events, including Barack Obama's 2013 inauguration. He also served as incident commander during the 2013 Navy Yard shooting.

Last Monday, Sund said, he began to worry about the Jan. 6 demonstration.

"We knew it would be bigger," Sund said. "We looked at the intelligence. We knew we would have large crowds, the potential for some violent altercations. I had nothing indicating we would have a large mob seize the Capitol."

Sure, there were claims that alt-right instigators had discussed storming the building and targeting lawmakers. But Sund said such threats had surfaced in the past.

"You might see rhetoric on social media. We had seen that many times before," he said. "People say a lot of things online."

Still, he decided to call Irving and Stenger to ask for permission to request that the National Guard be put on emergency standby. Irving didn't like the idea, Sund said; he said it would look bad because it would communicate that they presumed an emergency. He said he'd have to ask House leaders.

On the way home that evening, Sund did as Stenger suggested, calling Maj. Gen. William J. Walker, the head of the 1,000-member D.C. National Guard, to tell him that he might call on him for help. "If we can get you leaning forward," Sund said, "how long do you think it would take to get us assistance?"

Walker said he thought he could send 125 personnel fairly quickly. Over the weekend, Sund had also conferred with D.C. Police Chief Robert J. Contee III, who also had offered to lend a hand if trouble arose.

On Tuesday, Sund said he briefed Irving and Stenger, who said that backup seemed sufficient.

Just before noon Wednesday, Sund was monitoring Trump's speech to the crowd on the Ellipse when he was called away. There were reports of two pipe bombs near the Capitol grounds. So Sund didn't hear the president call on protesters to "fight" against lawmakers preparing to confirm Biden's victory. Nor did he hear Trump's personal attorney, Rudolph W. Giuliani, urging the crowd to engage in "trial by combat," an eerie reference to battles to the death in the series, "Game of Thrones." Sund said he now suspects that the pipe bombs were an intentional effort to draw officers away from the Capitol perimeter.

The first wave of protesters arrived at the Capitol about 12:40 p.m.

"As soon as they hit the fence line, the fight was on," Sund said. "Violent confrontations from the start. They came with riot helmets, gas masks, shields, pepper spray, fireworks, climbing gear — climbing gear! — explosives, metal pipes, baseball bats. I have never seen anything like it in 30 years of events in Washington."

Using video footage from the Capitol and radio transmissions from his incident commanders, Sund could see his officers trying to hold the line. But the rioters immediately yanked the barricade fence out of the way and threw it at his officers' heads.

"I realized at 1 p.m., things aren't going well," he said. "I'm watching my people getting slammed."

Sund immediately called Contee, who sent 100 officers to the scene, with some arriving within 10 minutes. But at 1:09 p.m., Sund said he called Irving and Stenger, telling them it was time to call in the Guard. He wanted an emergency declaration. Both men said they would "run it up the chain" and get back to him, he said.

Minutes later, aides to the top congressional leaders were called to Stenger's office for an update on the situation — and were infuriated to learn that the sergeants at arms had not yet called in the National Guard or any other reinforcements, as was their responsibility to do without seeking approval from leaders.

"What do you mean that there's no National Guard, that there's no reinforcements coming?" aides demanded to know. "Why haven't you ordered them, why aren't they already here?"

Sund said he called Irving twice more and Stenger once to check on their progress. At 1:50 p.m. — nine minutes before the Capitol was breached — Sund said he was losing patience. He called Walker to tell him to get ready to bring the Guard. Irving called back with formal approval at 2:10 p.m. By then, plainclothes Capitol Police agents were barricading the door to the Speaker's Lobby just off the House chamber to keep the marauders from charging in.

Sund finally had approval to call the National Guard. But that would prove to be just the beginning of a bureaucratic nightmare to get soldiers on the scene.

At 2:26 p.m., Sund joined a conference call organized by D.C's homeland security director, Chris Rodriguez. Among those on the screen were the District's police chief, mayor and Walker.

Unlike anywhere else in the country, the D.C. Guard does not report to a governor, but to the president, so Walker patched in the office of the Secretary of the Army, noting that he would need authorization from the Pentagon to order soldiers to the Capitol.

Piatt noted the Pentagon still needed authorization from Capitol Police to step foot on Capitol grounds. Sund ticked through details on the severity of the breach, but the call got noisy with crosstalk as officials asked more questions.

Contee sought to quiet the din. "Wait, wait," he said, and then directed attention to Sund. "Steve, are you requesting National Guard assistance at the Capitol?"

Sund said he replied: "I am making urgent, urgent, immediate request for National Guard assistance."

But Piatt, dialed in from across the river at the Pentagon, pushed back, according to Sund, saying he would prefer to have Guard soldiers take up posts around Washington, relieving D.C. police, so that they could respond to the Capitol instead of guardsmen. Sund's account is supported by four D.C. officials on the call, including Bowser.

Bowser told The Washington Post that Sund had "made it perfectly clear that they needed extraordinary help, including the National Guard. There was some concern from the Army of what it would look like to have armed military personnel on the grounds of the Capitol."

Falcicchio said that once Contee confirmed that Sund wanted the National Guard, D.C. officials echoed his request.

"Contee was definitely — I hate to use this term, but there's no other term for it. He was pleading," Falcicchio said. "He was pleading with them to fulfill the request that Capitol Police was making."

But the entire discussion was in vain. Only McCarthy, the secretary, could order the Guard deployed — and only with the approval of the Pentagon chief. McCarthy has since said that, at the time of the call, he was busy taking the requests to activate more Guard to acting defense secretary Christopher C. Miller.

At one point, according to a defense official, Contee said, "Let me be clear, are you denying this?" To which Piatt responded that he wasn't denying the request; he simply didn't have the authority to approve it.

"It was clear that it was a dire situation," the defense official said. "He didn't want to commit to anything without getting approval."

At 3:45 p.m., Stenger told Sund that he would ask his boss, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), for help getting the National Guard authorized more quickly. Sund never learned the result. More of Contee's officers had arrived and were helping remove rioters from the grounds. Capitol Police worked with other federal authorities, including the Secret Service, the Park Police and the FBI, to secure lawmakers, eject rioters and sweep the building so lawmakers could return to finish counting the electoral college votes that would allow them to formally recognize Biden's victory later that night.

According to a timeline the Defense Department published Friday, Miller verbally authorized the activation of the entire D.C. Guard at 3:04 p.m. It would take two more hours for most of the citizen soldiers to leave their jobs and homes, and pick up gear from the D.C. Armory.

Sund, who was officially replaced as chief Friday, said he is left feeling that America's bastions of democracy need far more security. He said the violent crowd that mobbed the Capitol was unlike anything he has ever seen.

"They were extremely dangerous and they were extremely prepared. I have a hard time calling this a demonstration," he said.

"I'm a firm supporter of First Amendment. This was none of that," he added. "This was criminal riotous activity."

Sund blamed Trump for putting his officers at risk, saying "the crowd left that rally and had been incited by some of the words the president said." Sund said he fears what may come next.

On Sunday, the Capitol's rolling green lawn was ringed by high black fencing and patrolled by personnel in green camouflage keeping the public at bay.

"This is the people's house. Congress members have always prided themselves on having an open campus," Sund said. But now, "I'm not sure that will continue to be defensible."

Paul Sonne, Julie Zauzmer, Allison Klein, Paul Kane, Alice Crites and Julie Tate contributed to this report.

Updated January 17, 2021

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Lonnie Coffman, Alabama man arrested at DC riot, had homemade napalm in Mason jars, feds say

al.com/news/birmingham/2021/01/lonnie-coffman-alabama-man-arrested-at-dc-riot-had-homemade-napalm-in-mason-jars-feds-say.html

January 8, 2021



1. Birmingham Real-Time News

Updated Jan 11, 2021; Posted Jan 08, 2021

By Carol Robinson | crobinson@al.com
The 70-year-old Alabama man arrested during the Capitol riot is now among 13 people who have been charged federally.

Lonnie Coffman is charged with possession of an unregistered firearm (destructive device) and carrying a pistol without a license. Authorities contend that Coffman's vehicle contained 11 Molotov cocktail explosive devices and guns.

"The lawless destruction of the U.S. Capitol building was an attack against one of our Nation's greatest institutions," said Acting U.S. Attorney Michael Sherwin.

"My Office, along with our law enforcement partners at all levels, have been expeditiously working and leveraging every resource to identify, arrest, and begin prosecuting these individuals who took part in the brazen criminal acts at the U.S. Capitol. We are resolute in our commitment to holding accountable anyone responsible for these disgraceful criminal acts, and to anyone who might be considering engaging in or inciting violence in the coming weeks – know this: you will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

Coffman lists an address in Eva which is in Morgan County, and formerly lived in Cullman County. Coffman's ex-wife said he is a big Trump supporter, but said she was not aware of his arrest and declined to comment further about him. Efforts to reach some of Coffman's children for comment weren't immediately successful.

Coffman has no prior arrests in Alabama and does not appear to have any social media presence. Law enforcement officials in Cullman County and Morgan County said they have had no known dealings with him.

The affidavit in the case against Coffman outlines what led to his Wednesday arrest.

United States Capitol Police at 12:47 p.m. Wednesday responded to a report of a possible explosive device in the vicinity of the National Republican Club, which is located at 300 First Street, Southeast, in Washington, D.C., according to the affidavit in Coffman's case.

A short time later, they received a report of an additional possible explosive device at the Democratic National Committee Headquarters, which is located at 430 South Capitol Street, about three blocks from the National Republican Club.

The bomb squad of the United States Capitol Police responded to both locations to provide assistance in the investigation and to render the possible explosive devices safe.

Also, as part of its response to the two reports of explosive devices, Capitol Police set up a perimeter and brought in bomb-sniffing dogs to sweep vehicles in the vicinity of the explosive device.

While doing so, officers spotted the handle of what appeared to be a firearm on the front right passenger seat of a red GMC Sierra 1500 pickup truck with Alabama license plate 52HJ703.

A law enforcement database check of the vehicle registration revealed that the vehicle was registered to Coffman in Falkville. After addressing the explosive devices found in the vicinity of the National Republican Club and the Democratic National Committee Headquarters, the bomb squad responded to the location of the Red GMC Sierra Pickup truck.

One black handgun was recovered from the right front passenger seat of the vehicle. After locating the black handgun, officers proceeded to search the rest of the pickup truck, including the bed of the truck, which was secured under a fabric top.

During the search of the cab of the truck, officers recovered, among other things, one M4 Carbine assault rifle along with rifle magazines loaded with ammunition. Also removed from Coffman's vehicle were:

- 11 Mason jars containing an unknown liquid with a golf tee in the top of each jar
- Cloth rags
- Lighters

All of those items, authorities said, are the components of Molotov cocktails. Based on this discovery, additional personnel were called

More investigators responded to the scene and determined that the liquid in the mason jars was an igniting substance consistent with gasoline.

ATF agents deemed them destructive devices.

About 6:30 p.m., a blue sedan with a female driver and a male front passenger approached law enforcement officers in the 400 block of First Street, Southeast. Officers made contact with the vehicle, and the male passenger stated that he was trying to get to his vehicle that was parked in the 300 block of First Street, Southeast, which is the location that the Red GMC Sierra 1500 pickup truck had been located and searched.

When the officers asked the man to provide a description of the vehicle, the male passenger stated that it was a red pickup truck. The officers then asked what the male passenger's name was, and he stated that his name was "Lonnie."

Coffman then asked officers whether they had located the bombs, which officers initially understood to be a reference to the components to the destructive devices located in Coffman's truck, but later understood to be a reference to the secure perimeter that had been set up by law enforcement, which perimeter had kept Coffman from returning to his car earlier.

Based on his statements, and their understanding of those statement's at the time, officers asked Coffman to step out of his vehicle so that they could assist him. When he got out, they asked him if he had any weapons on him, and he told officers he had gun in his right fronts pants pocket.

He was then detained and a 9 mm Smith &Wesson seized from him, as well as his car keys. Police also took a 22-caliber handgun from his pocket. Neither of the guns were registered, authorities said.

Under later questioning, Coffman told investigators the Mason jars contained melted Styrofoam and gasoline.

An ATF explosive experts said that those two things are an explosive mixture that has the effect of napalm in that it causes flammable liquid to better stick to objects that it hits upon detonation.

Law enforcement reviewed video surveillance footage from the area where the vehicle was discovered. The video footage indicates that the vehicle was parked there at around 9:15 a.m., and that around five minutes later one and only one individual departed the vehicle from the driver's side door.

The video footage reveals that the person who departed the vehicle was wearing a jacket with a patch consistent with clothing worn by Coffman when he was arrested.

Coffman's federal detention hearing is scheduled for Jan. 12.

The other 12 arrested are:

- Cleveland Meredith was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with making interstate threats to Speaker Nancy Pelosi.
- Richard Barnett, of Arkansas, was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful entry; violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds; and theft of public money, property, or records. Barnett allegedly entered a restricted are of the Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi.
- Mark Leffingwell, was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority; assault on a federal law enforcement officer; and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds. Leffingwell allegedly entered the Senate side of the Capitol and when stopped by law enforcement, struck an officer in the helmet and chest. Leffingwell is currently being held and has a detention hearing in district court today.
- Christopher Alberts, of Maryland, was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with carrying or having readily accessible, on the grounds of the United States Capitol Building, a firearm and ammunition. Specifically a Taurus G2C, 9mm handgun and 9mm caliber ammunition. The defendant appeared in district court and was released. He has a preliminary hearing scheduled for Jan. 28, 2021.
- Joshua Pruitt, was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority. The defendant appeared in district court and was released. He has a preliminary hearing scheduled for Jan. 28, 2021.
- Matthew Council, of Florida, was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds. Council allegedly unlawfully entered the Capitol building, and when stopped by law enforcement, he pushed the officer.

- Cindy Fitchett, of Virginia, was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority; or knowingly, with intent to impede government business or official functions, engaging in disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds; and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds.
- Michael Curzio, of Florida, was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority; or knowingly, with intent to impede government business or official functions, engaging in disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds; and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds.
- Douglas Sweet, of Florida, was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority; or knowingly, with intent to impede government business or official functions, engaging in disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds; and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds.
- Bradley Ruskelas, of Illinois, was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority; or knowingly, with intent to impede government business or official functions, engaging in disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds; and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds.
- Terry Brown, of Pennsylvania, was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority; or knowingly, with intent to impede government business or official functions, engaging in disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds; and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds.
- Thomas Gallagher was charged on Jan. 7, 2021, with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority; or knowingly, with intent to impede government business or official functions, engaging in disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds; and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds.

Additionally, multiple others have been arrested and charged in Superior Court with offenses such as unlawful entry, curfew violations, and firearms-related crimes. The cases are being prosecuted by the U.S Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and are being investigated jointly by the FBI; U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; United States Marshals Service; U.S. Capitol Police Department; and the Metropolitan Police Department.

"Today's charges are just the beginning of the FBI's ongoing efforts to hold those responsible for the criminal acts of violence and destruction that unfolded during the U.S. Capitol building breach on January 6th," FBI Director Christopher Wray said of those charged federally. "To be clear, what took place that day was not First Amendment-protected activity, but rather an affront on our democracy. The FBI, along with our local, state and federal

partners, is committed to ensuring that justice is served. We will continue to aggressively investigate each and every individual who chose to ignore the law and instead incite violence, destroy property, and injure others. "

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GOP lawmakers' fiery language under more scrutiny after deadly Capitol riot

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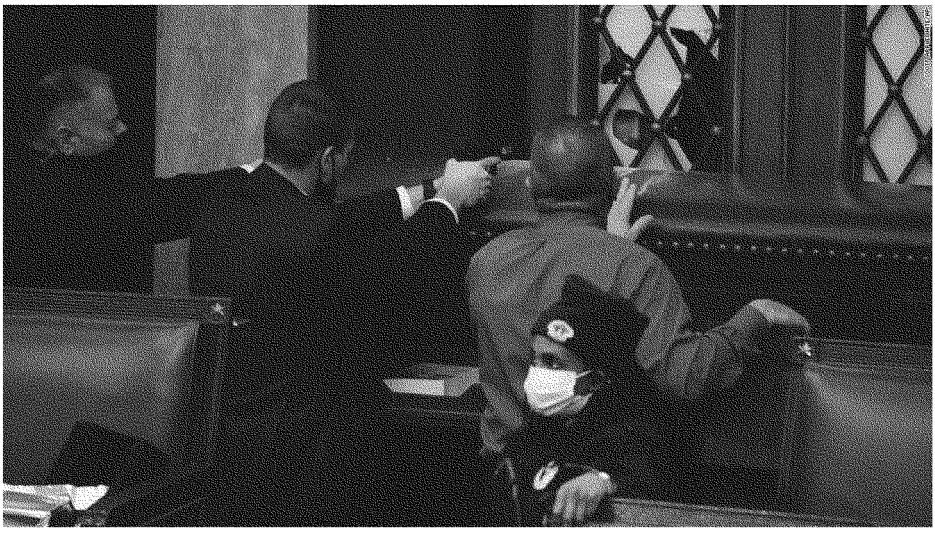
January 13, 2021



*(CNN)*As he fired up a crowd of Trump supporters gathered at Arizona's state capitol last month, Rep. Paul Gosar falsely assured them that the election results could still be overturned. "Once we conquer the Hill," the six-term Republican declared to a wave of cheers, "Donald Trump is returned to being the president."

Two and a half weeks later, Gosar was repeating baseless claims about stolen ballots and rigged voting machines in a speech to Congress when he found himself interrupted by chaos on the House floor. Within minutes, lawmakers were being evacuated out of the chambers as rioters advanced through the heart of American democracy -- spurred by the same rhetoric Gosar and some of his fellow Republicans had espoused.

The first part of Gosar's prediction, at least, had come true: Capitol Hill had been conquered. The insurrection last week that left five people dead, including a Capitol police officer, has spurred a new move to impeach President Donald Trump and a wave of criticism for the most prominent senators who voted to block President-elect Joe Biden's victory. But Gosar and several other of his GOP colleagues in the House are also facing new scrutiny for their incendiary language in the hours, days and weeks before the siege.

Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., objects to certifying Arizona's Electoral College votes during a joint session of the House and Senate convenes to count the electoral votes cast in November's

election, at the Capitol, Wednesday, Jan 6, 2021. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)
One of the top organizers of the movement that aimed to overturn the election results has claimed he worked closely with Republican congressmen. Ali Alexander, a leader of the "Stop the Steal" group, said in several Periscope livestream videos last month that he planned the rally that preceded the riot in conjunction with Gosar and two other congressional Republicans, Mo Brooks of Alabama and Andy Biggs of Arizona, as CNN first reported last week.
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"We're the four guys who came up with a January 6 event," Alexander said in one video in December. "It was to build momentum and pressure and then on the day change hearts and minds of Congress peoples who weren't yet decided or saw everyone outside and said, 'I can't be on the other side of that mob.'"
Brooks, a staunch conservative and one of Trump's closest congressional allies, was one of the first speakers at the National Mall rally that preceded the riot, and his fiery language helped set the tone for what came next.
"Today is the day American patriots start taking down names and kicking ass!" the six-term Republican shouted to the assembled protesters. "Our ancestors sacrificed their blood, their sweat, their tears, their fortunes and sometimes their lives... Are you willing to do the same?"
Hours later, when some of the same people Brooks had spoken to were smashing windows at the US Capitol, the lawmaker livetweeted as he and his colleagues were being evacuated from the House chambers.
"Tear gas dispersed in Capitol Rotunda," Brooks wrote in a tweet posted from his iPad. "Congressmen ordered to grab gas masks under chairs in case have to leave in haste!"
Brooks was the first member of Congress to say publicly that he would object to the certification of the electoral votes for Biden. The day before the Jan. 6 rally, he tweeted that Trump had "asked me personally to speak & tell the American people about the election system weaknesses that the Socialist Democrats exploited to steal this election."

Rep. Mo Brooks, R-Alabama, speaks Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington, at a rally in support of President Donald Trump called the "Save America Rally." (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)
After the insurrection, while Brooks condemned rioters and called for them to be "prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," he has also repeatedly suggested on social media and in interviews that at least some of the people who stormed the Capitol were members of the left-wing group Antifa -- a baseless claim that has been widely debunked.
Like Trump, who said Tuesday that his remarks at the rally, when he urged supporters to "fight like hell," were "totally appropriate," Brooks has denied responsibility for the riot, telling a radio show host the day after the attack that he "absolutely" had no regrets.
He later argued in a statement Tuesday that his remarks could not have been the cause of the violence. "No one at the rally interpreted my remarks to be anything other than what they were: A pep talk after the derriere kicking conservatives suffered in the dismal 2020 elections," Brooks wrote.

Gosar has closely associated himself with the Stop the Steal movement for months. He tagged or replied to Alexander in more than two dozen tweets since Election Day, sharing false rumors about mysteriously appearing ballots and deleted vote counts, and spoke at the December 19 rally at the Arizona state capitol that Alexander organized. He penned an online open letter last month titled "Are We Witnessing a Coup d'etat?"

"Biden should concede," Gosar tweeted on the morning of last week's congressional vote, sharing a photo of the pro-Trump protesters gathered in front of the Washington Monument. "I want his concession on my desk tomorrow morning. Don't make me come over there."

As the insurrection was still going on, Gosar shared divergent messages about the rioters. In one tweet with a photo of people scaling the walls of the Capitol, Gosar wrote "let's not get carried away here," adding that "if anyone on the ground reads this and is beyond the line come back." But on the right-wing social media network Parler, which has since gone offline, Gosar posted the same image with a different caption: "Americans are upset."

Even Gosar's family members say his language has gone too far. Several of his siblings -- who recorded a viral campaign ad for one of his opponents in 2018 -- have argued he should resign or be removed.

"My brother swore an oath to defend the Constitution against enemies foreign and domestic," the congressman's younger brother Tim Gosar, a private investigator in Fort Collins, Colorado, told CNN this week. "And he has blatantly broken that oath."

Gosar's office did not respond to a request for comment.

UNITED STATES - DECEMBER 3: Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz., is seen after a news conference with members of the House Freedom Caucus to call on Attorney General William Barr to release findings of an investigation into allegations of 2020 election fraud, outside the Capitol on Thursday, December 3, 2020. (Photo CQ-Roll Call, Inc via Getty Images)

At the Arizona Stop the Steal rally with Gosar, Alexander played a video that he said Biggs, the chair of the conservative Freedom Caucus, had sent for the crowd.

"Andy Biggs here," the Arizona congressman said in the recording. "I wish I could be with you. I'm in the DC swamp fighting on behalf of Arizona's residents and freedom fighters all over the country." The crowd responded with a chant of "Biggs! Biggs! Biggs!" The Arizona Republic first reported the video on Monday.

A Biggs spokesperson told CNN that the congressman recorded the video at the request of Gosar's staff, and had never worked with Alexander.

"Congressman Biggs is not aware of hearing of or meeting Mr. Alexander at any point -- let alone working with him to organize some part of a planned protest," the spokesperson said. "He did not have any contact with protestors or rioters, nor did he ever encourage or foster the rally or protests."

Biggs was one of several Republican members of Congress who refused to wear masks in a secure room where lawmakers were staying during the riot, according to a video posted by the congressional news site Punchbowl. Several Democratic members have said in recent days that they tested positive for Covid after being in the room.

Other congressional Republicans also painted their efforts to oppose Biden's victory in sweeping, historic terms. In the days before the riot, Freshman Reps. Laura Boebert of Colorado and Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia both called the Wednesday electoral vote certification a "1776 moment."

And speaking at the same rally as Brooks and Trump, Rep. Madison Cawthorn of North Carolina, another newly elected member, told the crowd that "the Republicans are hiding and not fighting" and "they are trying to silence your voice."

"I want you to chant with me so loud that the cowards in Washington DC that I serve with can hear you," he declared.

Newly elected U.S. Rep Madison Cawthorn (R-NC) speaks as supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump gather by the White House ahead of Trump's speech to contest the certification by the U.S. Congress of the results of the 2020 U.S. presidential election in Washington, U.S, January 6, 2021. REUTERS

A Cawthorn spokesperson said the congressman condemned the violence during the riot and has criticized Trump for "directing protestors toward the Capitol."

Two Democrats have introduced a resolution to censure Brooks for his comments at the rally, and others have argued for expelling Gosar and other congressional Republicans who backed efforts to overturn the election. Democratic leaders have not made plans yet to vote on a censure resolution, but the subject has been discussed repeatedly during private conference calls, Democratic sources say.

"Mo Brooks and others like him should resign," Rep. Jim McGovern, a Massachusetts Democrat, said on CNN Monday. "They should have the decency to resign. They don't belong in this institution. They have demonstrated a contempt for democracy and for freedom."

Denver Riggleman, a moderate Republican who lost his primary nomination last year to a more conservative challenger, said that he thought GOP leaders needed to have a "come to Jesus" moment and hold the congressmen who fanned the flames of insurrection accountable. But he said he doubted that the GOP base would punish members like Gosar or Brooks when they were back on the ballot.

"Those elected officials probably will get reelected, and that's that's the issue that we have right now," Riggleman said. "I think that's what scares me the most."

CNN's Nelli Black, Yahya Abou-Ghazala, Ben Naughton, Bob Ortega contributed to this report.

OPINION > OPINION COLUMNISTS • Opinion, Opinion Columnist

Sunstein: Does the 25th Amendment apply to Trump? Quite possibly.



Evan Vucci, The Associated Press

President Donald Trump speaks during a rally protesting the electoral college certification of Joe Biden as President, Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington. After the rally protesters marched to the U.S. Capitol building, broke through barriers, and stormed through the building terrorizing lawmakers and vandalizing offices. One woman was shot and killed inside the Capitol.

By **CASS R. SUNSTEIN** | Bloomberg Opinion

January 7, 2021 at 11:23 a.m.

In the aftermath of President Donald Trump's provocation of a riot at the U.S. Capitol, there is fresh discussion of the two avenues for removing a sitting president. The first is impeachment. The second is the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

There is no question that Trump's conduct was an impeachable "high crime and misdemeanor." The applicability of the 25th Amendment isn't as obvious.

The two grounds for removal are fundamentally different. Impeachment is for egregious abuse of the powers of the office. The 25th Amendment is concerned with some kind of impairment that renders a president unable to do his job.

For present purposes, its key provision is Section 4:

"Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.
"After this declaration is transmitted, the president's only recourse is to submit his own declaration, saying that he is indeed able to do his job. At that point, the vice president and the majority of the principal officers of the executive departments (essentially the cabinet) can disagree. If so, Congress gets to decide the question."

The 25th Amendment is clear about the process. It is less clear about the legal standard. What does it mean to say that a president "is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office"? Is Trump unable to do that?

The short answer is that horrific and even impeachable acts do not necessarily justify removal under the 25th Amendment, whose focus is on physical or mental disability. For any president, including Trump, the question is one of fact: Could the vice president and the cabinet reasonably find that the president is so seriously impaired that he can no longer perform his constitutional role?

For most of Trump's presidency, the answer has been clearly no — whatever you think about his performance. Are things different today?



The background of the 25th Amendment offers helpful guidance. During the mid-1960s congressional debates over the provision, which was ratified in 1967, many members focused their attention on three cases. These were the prolonged deathbed experience of President James Garfield in 1881, the post-stroke presidency of Woodrow Wilson starting in 1919 and several cases in which President Dwight Eisenhower, suffering from heart problems, agreed to transfer power to Vice President Richard Nixon.

The first two cases played the largest role in the legislative debates, and the discussion demonstrated a clear congressional focus on diminished cognitive capacity. Garfield and Wilson faced terrible physical afflictions, but legislators were especially interested in adverse effects on cognitive ability. Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana — a sponsor of the Senate resolution that eventually became the 25th Amendment — noted that "the ability to perform the job would be the prime evidence that would determine whether a president were disabled or not."

Importantly, Bayh was focusing on cognitive incapacity. Supporters of an early version of the 25th Amendment emphasized the same thing, noting a possible advisory role for psychiatrists.

Given the text, it is clear that the vice president and cabinet cannot remove a president because they abhor his decisions, because he has a terrible temper, because he is in a foul mood, because he is going to war (or not going to war), or because he is impossible to deal with. In ordinary language, they might say and believe that he is "unable" to perform his constitutional functions, but that is not what the amendment is about.

Still, we could imagine cases of acute depression, crippling anxiety, distress, or otherwise serious emotional breakdown, which would also prove debilitating, even if the president is not literally unable to make decisions. The debilitation could take the form of highly erratic behavior, which might show that the president is "unable" to do his job within the meaning of the 25th Amendment.

Turn to Trump in this light. In the past weeks, his behavior has been worse than highly erratic. He has repeatedly lied about facts related to the election and in some ways has seemed to lose touch with reality. He has failed to manage the COVID-19 crisis and has been obsessed with maintaining power. Is he suffering from some impairment, even if a temporary one, that is making him unable to do his job?

That's the constitutional question. It's largely one of fact, not easily resolved by outsiders. The vice president and the cabinet have the authority to answer it. On the basis of what happened yesterday, it's no longer clear that the answer is "no."

Cass R. Sunstein is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is the author of "The Cost-Benefit Revolution" and a co-author of "Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness.

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Capitol Police officer who responded to attack has died

BY CAROLINE LINTON
JANUARY 11, 2021 / 9:59 AM / CBS NEWS

A Capitol Police officer has died days after responding to Wednesday's assault on the building, the Capitol police confirmed Sunday to CBS News. Capitol police said Officer Howard Liebengood died off-duty.



The Most Beautiful Identical Twins Grown Up

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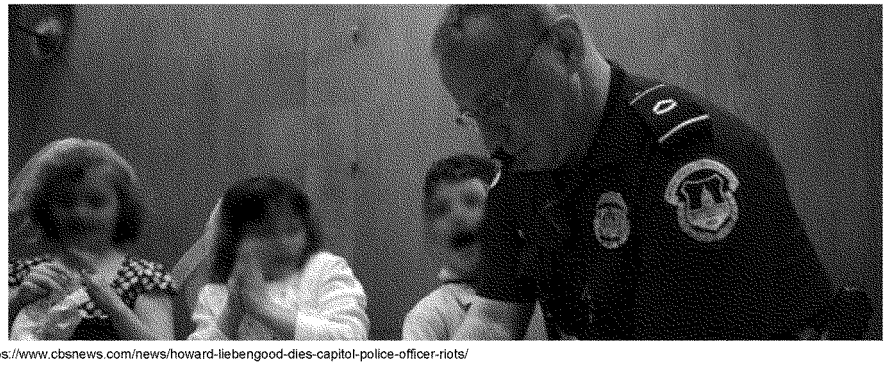
Capitol police said in a statement that Liebengood, 51, served on the Senate side. He had been with the Capitol police department since April 2005. The police union chairman called it a "tragic day."

"We are reeling from the death of Officer Liebengood. Every Capitol Police Officer puts the security of others before their own safety and Officer Liebengood was an

example of the selfless service that is the hallmark of USCP," Capitol police union chairman Gus Papathanasiou said in a statement.





Capitol Police Officer Howard Liebengood seen April 24, 2008.

TOM WILLIAMS/ROLL CALL/GETTY IMAGES

Liebengood's father, Howard Liebengood Sr, served as the Senate sergeant-at-arms from 1981 until 1983.

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Other tributes poured in Sunday, including from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senator Tim Kaine and former Secretary of State John Kerry.

The White House issued a proclamation lowering the flag to half staff on Sunday honoring both Liebengood and Capitol police officer Brian Sicknick, who died Thursday as a result of injuries sustained at the Capitol.

A mob of Trump supporters breached the Capitol on Wednesday, eventually reaching the House and Senate floors. One of the rioters was shot and killed by Capitol police, and three other rioters died as a result of medical emergencies

Capitol police, and three other rioters died as a result of medical emergencies, police said.



Trump supporters storm Capitol in Washington, D.C.

First published on January 10, 2021 / 9:05 PM

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'Credible threats of violence' prompt closure of Michigan capitol to the public ahead of Electoral College vote

cnn.com/2020/12/14/politics/michigan-state-house-and-senate-closed-threats/index.html

December 14, 2020



Washington (CNN)"Credible threats of violence" have prompted Michigan authorities to close the state capitol to the public and shutter House and Senate offices, a spokeswoman said, on the day the Electoral College will formally declare Joe Biden the President-elect.

The tension surrounding Monday's procedure -- a typically routine event affirming a presidential victory -- was underscored in an interview with a GOP state lawmaker who floated the possibility of violence at the capitol and was swiftly stripped of his committee assignments by the legislature's Republican leaders.

"The decision was not made because of anticipated protests, but was made based on credible threats of violence," Amber McCann, the deputy chief of staff and spokeswoman for Republican Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey, said in a statement.

Track Electoral College votes, state by state

Gideon D'Assandro, the communications director for state GOP House Speaker Lee Chatfield, also told CNN Sunday evening that the offices would be closed. He didn't elaborate on the security concern, but said the House and legislative bodies were informed about it by the Michigan State Police, which declined to comment on the matter to CNN.

Citing "safety and security concerns in the downtown Lansing area," a notification emailed to Michigan lawmakers advised staff to work remotely.

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"Only those needed for the Electoral College will be permitted in the Capitol Building," says the email, a copy of which was shared with CNN by D'Assandro.

The Electoral College meeting will be streamed via Senate TV, McCann said.

Monday morning, Chatfield and Speaker-Elect Jason Wentworth announced that state Rep. Gary Eisen, a Republican, had been stripped of his assignments following remarks in a WPHM radio interview in which he said he was helping coordinate protests and could not assure that there would not be violence.

Eisen, who supported the failed Texas lawsuit that sought to overturn the election results, did not give details about who was organizing the protests but said he was warned "it's going to be violence, it's going to be protests."

"We have been consistent in our position on issues of violence and intimidation in politics -- it is never appropriate and never acceptable," Chatfield and Wentworth said in a statement. "That is true of threats or suggestions of violence against Gov. Whitmer, Secretary Benson, Rep. Johnson and others on the Oversight committee, Republicans, Democrats, and members of the Electoral College. That applies to threats made toward public officials, and it must also apply when the public officials open the door to violent behavior and refuse to condemn it. We must do better."

CNN has reached out to Eisen for comment.

Electoral College set to seal Trump's fate -- yet again

Other states are also increasing security protocols due to concerns over safety, threats and protests.

Electors in Pennsylvania told CNN they are getting a law enforcement escort, in groups, to the venue where the vote will be held and then back to their hotels and other locations. In Arizona, the Electoral College will meet at an undisclosed location, according to the public information office for the secretary of state. And electors in Wisconsin are being told to use an unmarked entrance with police escort, according to one of the electors.

The Electoral College count has gained a new significance this year amid unprecedented pressure from President Donald Trump and several Republican allies who have sought to overturn the election in key battleground states -- including Michigan -- that he lost to Biden.

Michigan, in particular, has been an epicenter of tension this year. In the spring, Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer faced heated pushback over pandemic stay-at-home orders, and protesters, some of whom were armed, stormed the Michigan capitol. And weeks before the election, 13 people were charged in an alleged domestic terrorism plot to kidnap Whitmer.

Whitmer and other state Democratic officials have at times blamed Trump for provoking tensions, with the governor writing in an Atlantic op-ed that every time the President attacks her on Twitter, there is a "surge of vicious attacks" and that he is putting women leaders "at risk."

The White House has repeatedly disputed Whitmer's accusations.

This story has been updated with additional reporting and reaction.

CNN's Annie Grayer, Kristina Sgueglia, Leslie Perrot, Adrienne Broaddus, Bill Kirkos and Brian Todd contributed to this report.

Chaos in Capitol: Riots over election

peninsuladailynews.com/news/lawmakers-given-gas-masks-as-protesters-breach-u-s-capitol/

January 6, 2021



WASHINGTON, D.C — A violent mob loyal to President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday and forced lawmakers into hiding in a stunning attempt to overturn America's presidential election.

Democrat Joe Biden's inauguration is Jan. 20.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said lawmakers were resuming the counting of electoral votes Wednesday evening after the Capitol was cleared of the pro-Trump occupiers and the process was put on hold.

Earlier in the day, the nation's elected representatives scrambled to crouch under desks and don gas masks while police futilely tried to barricade the building in what many called one of the most jarring scenes ever to unfold in a seat of American political power.

An unidentified woman was shot and killed inside the Capitol, and the mayor of Washington, D.C., instituted an evening curfew in an attempt to contain the violence.



Supporters of President Donald Trump climb the west wall of the the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday in Washington, D.C. (Jose Luis Magana/The Associated Press)

The rioters were encouraged by Trump, who has spent weeks falsely attacking the integrity of the election and had urged his supporters to descend on Washington on Wednesday to protest Congress' formal approval of Biden's victory.

Some Republican lawmakers were in the midst of raising objections to the results on his behalf when the proceedings were abruptly halted by the mob.

Together, the protests and the GOP election objections amounted to an almost unthinkable challenge to American democracy and exposed the depths of the divisions that have coursed through the country during Trump's four years in office.



Police with guns drawn watch as protesters try to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday in Washington, D.C. (J. Scott Applewhite/The Associated Press)

The president spent much of the afternoon in his private dining room off the Oval Office watching scenes of the violence on television.

Shortly after Biden urged Trump to call for an end to the violence, Trump issued a pair of tweets and a taped video telling his supporters it was time to "go home in peace" — yet he still said he backed their cause.

Hours later, Twitter for the first time locked Trump's account, demanded that he remove three tweets excusing violence and threatened "permanent suspension."

A somber President-elect Biden, two weeks away from being inaugurated, said American democracy was "under unprecedented assault," a sentiment echoed by many in Congress, including some Republicans.

Former President George W. Bush said he watched the events in "disbelief and dismay."

"What happened here today was an insurrection, incited by the President of the United States," said Republican Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah.

There were harsh words from major business organizations and the Republican National Committee, too.

"Our soldiers have died carrying the American flag into battle for our freedom," tweeted RNC communications director Michael Ahrens.

"To see that flag used in the name of unfounded conspiracy theories is a disgrace to the nation, and every decent American should be disgusted by it."

Trump had tweeted, "These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long."

"Remember this day forever!"



Trump supporters try to break through a police barrier Wednesday at the Capitol in Washington. As Congress prepares to affirm President-elect Joe Biden's Electoral College victory, thousands of people have gathered to show their support for President Donald Trump and his claims of election fraud. (Julio Cortez/The Associated Press)

The domed Capitol building has for centuries been the scene of protests and occasional violence, including a 1954 shooting involving Puerto Rican nationalists.

But Wednesday's events were particularly astounding both because they unfolded at least initially with the implicit blessing of the president and because of the underlying goal of overturning the results of a free and fair presidential election.

Tensions were already running high when lawmakers gathered early Wednesday afternoon for the constitutionally mandated counting of the Electoral College results, in which Biden defeated Trump, 306-232.

Despite pleas from Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, more than 150 GOP lawmakers planned to support objections to some of the results, though lacking evidence of fraud or wrongdoing in the election.

Trump spent the lead-up to the proceedings publicly hectoring Vice President Mike Pence, who had a largely ceremonial role in the proceedings, to aid the effort. He tweeted on Wednesday: "Do it Mike, this is a time for extreme courage!"

But Pence, in a statement shortly before presiding, defied Trump, saying he could not claim "unilateral authority" to reject the electoral votes that make Biden president.

Shortly after the first GOP objections, protesters fought past police and breached the building, shouting and waving Trump and American flags as they marched through the halls.

Lawmakers were told to duck under their seats for cover and put on gas masks after tear gas was used in the Capitol Rotunda. Some House lawmakers tweeted they were sheltering in place in their offices.

Rep. Scott Peters, D-Calif., told reporters he was in the House chamber when rioters began storming it.

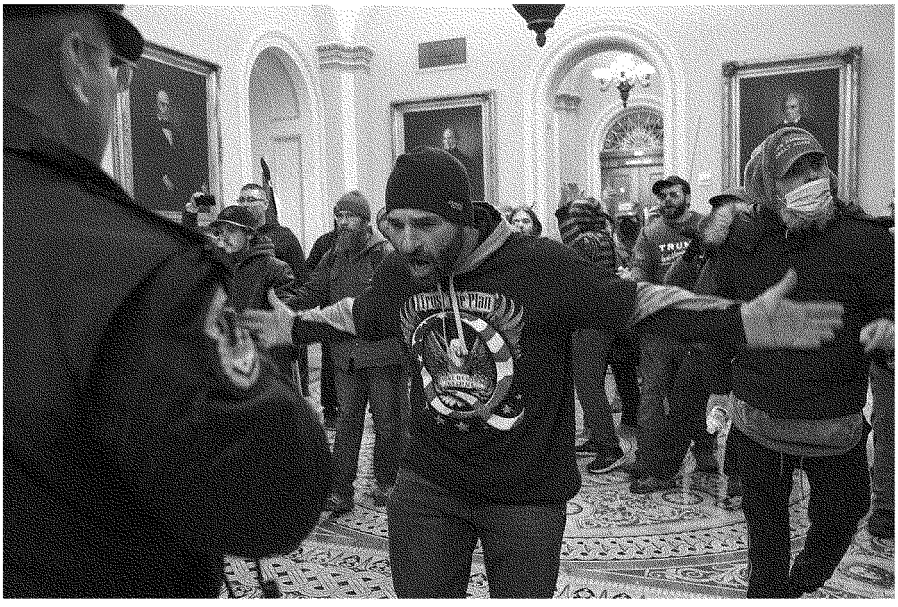
Security officers "made us all get down, you could see that they were fending off some sort of assault, it looked like. They had a piece of furniture up against the door, the door, the entry to the floor from the Rotunda, and they had guns pulled," Peters said.

"And they just told us to take our pins off," he added, referring to lapel pins members wear so Capitol Police can quickly identify them. Then the lawmakers were evacuated.

Staff members grabbed the boxes of Electoral College votes as the evacuation took place. Otherwise, said Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., the ballots likely would have been destroyed by the protesters.

Trump supporters posting on far-right internet forums celebrated the chaos.

Messages posted on one turned from profane frustration over the content of Trump's speech to glee when supporters stormed the building. At least one leading figure was livestreaming video from inside the Capitol during the siege

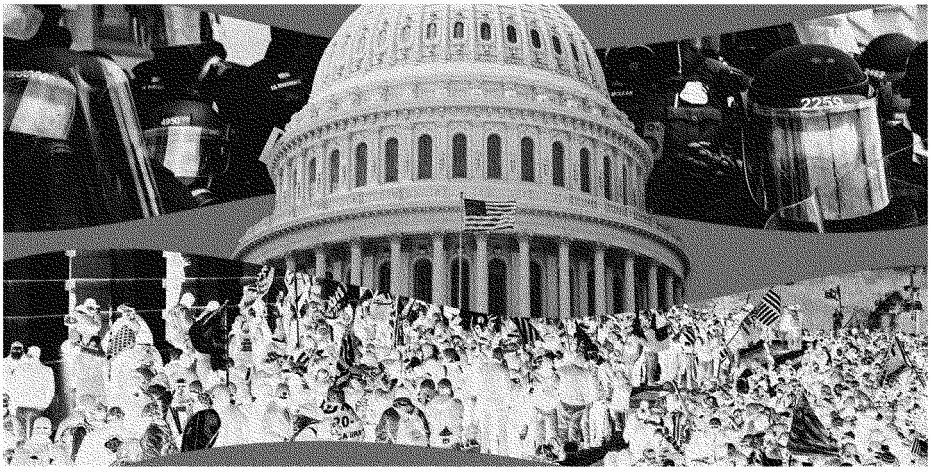


Trump supporters gesture to U.S. Capitol Police in the hallway outside of the Senate chamber on Wednesday at the Capitol in Washington, D.C. (Manuel Balce Ceneta/The Associated Press)

CONGRESS

Jan. 7 highlights and analysis of unrest in Washington, D.C.

The rioting at the Capitol left four dead and several injured after Trump urged protesters to march on the building.



— Chelsea Stahl / NBC News

Updated Jan. 8, 2021, 12:27 AM EST

Several senior Trump administration officials resigned Thursday after rioting and bloodshed by violent Trump supporters at the Capitol on Wednesday left four people dead and drew calls from members of Congress for an investigation into security measures around the complex.

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao was the first of Trump's Cabinet secretaries to announce she was resigning, and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos followed hours later.

A police officer died Thursday night from injuries suffered during the pro-Trump mob's breach of the Capitol.

Congress confirmed President-elect Joe Biden's election victory early Thursday morning – more than 14 hours after the tally began – after members were whisked away just after the proceedings had started when a mob of Trump supporters overran the building. Biden is scheduled to be inaugurated as the 46th president on Jan. 20.

This live coverage has ended. Continue reading news from Jan. 8, 2021 about the backlash over the riots.

Read the highlights:

– 'Deeply troubled' by Capitol riot, Transportation Secretary Chao resigns.

– What happened after Trump told supporters to swarm the Capitol.

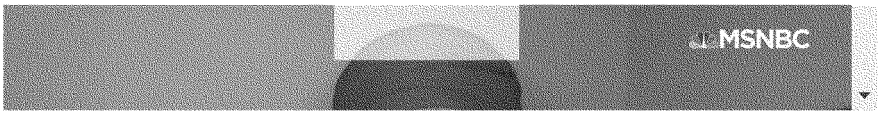
– Law enforcement officials across U.S. shocked by police failure to stop rioters.

– Trump loyalists push evidence-free claims that antifa activists fueled mob.

– How an ordinary Congress vote devolved into disarray.

3d ago / 12:27 AM EST

Rep. Omar says Republicans who enabled Trump 'have blood on their hands'



Phil Helsel
3d ago / 10:56 PM EST

More than 200 congressional lawmakers now calling for Trump's removal

More than 200 members of the U.S. Senate and House support the removal of President Donald Trump, according to an NBC News' count.

The calls are in reaction to Wednesday's riot at the U.S. Capitol by a pro-Trump mob, which followed months of Trump claiming the election he lost was fraudulent or stolen, claims for which there is no evidence, and a rally Wednesday. Trump has been accused of inciting the violence.

The measures discussed include a possible second impeachment or the 25th Amendment. Almost all are Democrats or Independents; Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Illinois, is the only Republican.

Trump will leave office in a little less than two weeks, on Jan. 20 when Joe Biden is inaugurated. On Thursday, Trump in a video acknowledged a new administration would be inaugurated and he called Wednesday's chaos "a heinous attack" and condemned the violence.

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Pro-Trump militia, conspiracy theorists rioted in Capitol, not antifa

Pro-Trump militia, conspiracy theorists rioted in U.S. Capitol, not antifa



Phil Helsel
3d ago / 10:24 PM EST

Another Trump administration official quits

Dr. Elinore F. McCance-Katz, the assistant secretary for mental health and substance use, resigned Thursday following Wednesday's riot at the U.S. Capitol by a pro-Trump mob.

McCance-Katz wrote in a statement that she had planned to stay on until the next administration, "but my plans abruptly changed last evening when, on my way back from visiting an excellent residential treatment program in New York, I saw the violent takeover of the Capitol building."

McCance-Katz did not mention President Donald Trump by name but said "I cannot support language that results in incitement of violence and risks our very existence."

Trump has been accused of inciting some in the crowd to violence with his baseless claims of voter fraud or a fraudulent election. McCance-Katz is the latest Trump administration official to quit following the riot, including Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration is an agency under Health and Human Services and was headed by McCance-Katz.

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Abigail Williams
3d ago / 9:54 PM EST

U.S. diplomats to tell world 'order will be restored, those responsible will be held to account'

After public outcries of shock and dismay from U.S. democratic allies around the world, the State Department has sent talking points to U.S. diplomats abroad on how to address the pro-Trump riots that broke out at the U.S. Capitol.

The note makes clear that the State Department's official position is that President-elect Joe Biden will be sworn in as the next president of the United States. Till now, guidance to posts about the presidential transition has been limited, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has been reticent to publicly acknowledge Biden's victory.

"As is being called for by representatives from across the political spectrum, order will be restored, those responsible will be held to account, and the democratic process will continue," the communication reads. "President-elect Biden will be inaugurated on January 20."

The State Department memo ended with a list of hand-chosen "bipartisan quotes" from President Donald Trump, Vice-President Mike Pence and Biden.

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Phil Helsel
3d ago / 6:56 AM EST

Sen. Ted Cruz says Trump 'bears some responsibility' for Capitol riot

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, who joined a doomed effort to "audit" the election results that was criticized as a publicity stunt, has said that President Donald Trump "plainly bears some responsibility" for Wednesday's riot at the Capitol.

Cruz, R-Texas, made the comments in an interview with NBC Dallas-Fort Worth, broadcast a day after a pro-Trump mob stormed the Capitol.

"Look, I think he plainly bears some responsibility," Cruz said. "At the end of the day, criminals are responsible for their own conduct and the terrorists who conducted that attack, they bear the responsibility. But I think his angry rhetoric was reckless, and I think it was harmful."

Cruz joined a handful of senators to support Republican objections to counting the electoral votes in Arizona and Pennsylvania, neither of which succeeded. Cruz had called for Congress to "appoint an electoral commission to examine claims of electoral fraud." There has been no evidence of the voter fraud Trump has baselessly claimed. Cruz has argued his efforts were to give Americans "confidence" in the election.

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Education Secretary Betsy DeVos is second Cabinet member to resign

On Thursday, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos became the second Cabinet member to resign after a pro-Trump mob stormed the Capitol.

In her resignation letter to President Donald Trump, DeVos said her boss played a direct role in the violence.

"There is no mistaking the impact your rhetoric had on the situation, and it's the inflection point for me," she wrote.

"Impressionable children are watching all of this, and they are learning from us," she wrote. "... they must know from us that America is greater than what transpired yesterday."

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao announced her resignation earlier in the day.

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Wall Street Journal editorial calls on Trump to resign rather than be impeached

The Wall Street Journal's editorial board condemned President Donald Trump for Wednesday's deadly riot at the U.S. Capitol, and said he should resign rather than face the prospect of a second impeachment.

"It is best for everyone, himself included, if he goes away quietly," the board, which is generally seen as conservative, wrote in the editorial published online Thursday. The Journal is owned by a company controlled by media mogul Rupert Murdoch.

It says the president of the United States "incited a crowd to march on the legislative branch" and called it "an assault on the constitutional process of transferring power after an election." They say Trump was also to blame for waiting too long to call off the rioters and for hedging when he did, and was accused of betraying his supporters by lying to them about the election.

"If Mr. Trump wants to avoid a second impeachment, his best path would be to take personal responsibility and resign," the editorial board wrote.

"We know an act of grace by Mr. Trump isn't likely. In any case this week has probably finished him as a serious political figure," the editorial reads. Thursday evening Trump in a video address acknowledged a new administration will be inaugurated on Jan. 20.

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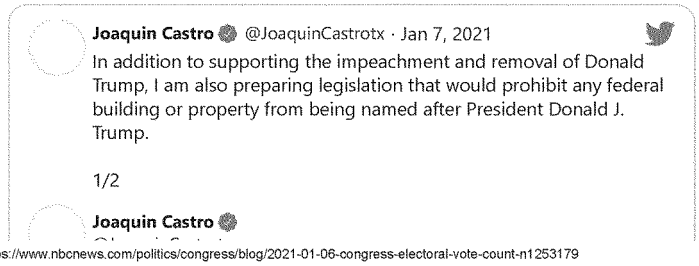
Joaquin Castro wants to ban Trump's name from ever going on a federal building



@JoaquinCastrotx

President Trump incited an insurrection that damaged some our nation's most significant and sacred federal property.

Most importantly - let us learn from our past.

Donald Trump should never become a future generation's confederate symbol. 2/2

8:51 PM · Jan 7, 2021

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4d ago / 8:46 PM EST

Secret Service, congressional panel vow safe inauguration

The U.S. Secret Service and the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies vowed Thursday that President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration will be safe following the violent clash at the U.S Capitol.

A spokesperson for the Secret Service said for more than a year the agency has been working "tirelessly" to ensure Inauguration Day is "safe and secure." The agency plan, the spokesperson said, prepares for all contingencies "at every level."

The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, which was created in 1901 to plan and host the inaugural ceremonies, also said in a statement that the ceremony will be safe and that Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will be sworn in on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol on January 20.

"The outrageous attack on the Capitol, however, will not stop us from affirming to Americans – and the world – that our democracy endures," the bipartisan committee said in a statement. "The great American tradition of an inaugural ceremony has occurred in times of peace, in times of turmoil, in times of prosperity, and in times of adversity."

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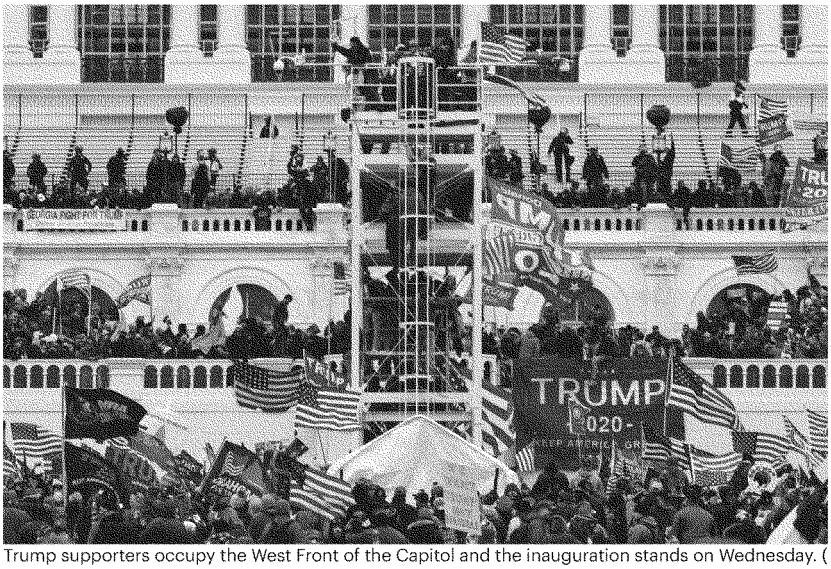
CONGRESS

Pro-Trump protesters storm Capitol during Electoral College certification, causing lockdown

Vice President Mike Pence, Senate President Pro Tempore Charles E. Grassley and Speaker Nancy Pelosi taken to secure locations



Trump supporters occupy the West Front of the Capitol and the inauguration stands on Wednesday. (

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call) (CQ Roll Call)



By **Chris Marquette, Katherine Tully-McManus, and Chris Cioffi**
Posted January 6, 2021 at 2:39pm

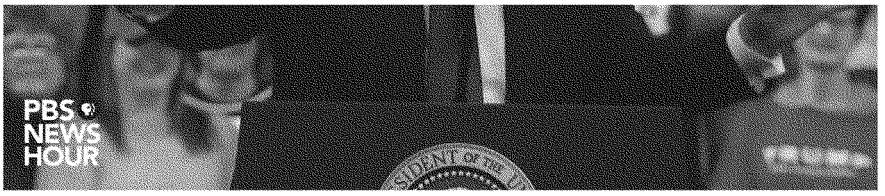
Supporters of President Donald Trump who want Congress to overturn his Electoral College loss clashed with Capitol Police, breached barriers and stormed into the Capitol on Wednesday, waving Trump flags while lawmakers were in the midst of certifying the election results, causing a lockdown of the Capitol campus.

The two chambers, in the midst of debating objections to Arizona's electoral votes, were evacuated. Vice President Mike Pence, Senate President Pro Tempore Charles E. Grassley and Speaker Nancy Pelosi, all in the presidential line of succession, have been taken to secure locations by Capitol Police and the Secret Service.

The scene was chaotic as animated groups of pro-Trump protesters met a line of Capitol Police officers en route to the Capitol, where Congress was poised to certify President-elect Joe Biden's Electoral College victory despite several pairs of Senate and House Republican objectors.

Because of an internal security threat, the Capitol Police at 2:18 p.m. Wednesday issued a lockdown of the Capitol complex, urging people to move into the nearest office, lock doors, take emergency equipment, and stay away from external doors and windows.





The Capitol Police at 2:03 p.m. urged all occupants of the Cannon House Office Building to move to Rayburn and Longworth, which are accessible from Cannon through underground routes, which are closed to the public today.

"Due to Police Activity, all personnel are advised to relocate from the Cannon House Office Building to the Rayburn and Longworth House Office buildings through the underground tunnels," the Capitol Police alert said. "Do not evacuate outside the buildings. All personnel should shelter in place in the Rayburn and Longworth House Office Buildings."

Just minutes later, the Capitol Police halted any movement into or out of all buildings on the Capitol campus.

"All buildings within the Capitol Complex, Capitol: Due to an external security threat located on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol Building, no entry or exit is permitted at this time," the alert said. "You may move throughout the building(s) but stay away from exterior windows and doors. If you are outside, seek cover."

philip lewis
@Phil_Lewis_

Whoa: Trump supporters going at it with the police on the steps of the Capitol as Congress counts the Electoral College ballots inside



Earlier, the Capitol Police ordered the evacuation of both the Cannon House Office Building and the James Madison Memorial Building of the Library of Congress. Madison was first evacuated at 1:10 p.m., and Cannon followed at 1:22 p.m.

Minutes later, at 1:39 p.m., the Capitol Police announced an internal relocation at Cannon.

"INTERNAL RELOCATION: The Cannon Building is executing internal relocation due to police activity. All other staff should remain inside their building until further guidance is received from USCP. If you are outside a building on Capitol Hill, follow the direction of law enforcement officers," the alert read. "If you are in the Cannon Building, take visitors, escape hoods, and Go Kits and report to the South tunnel connecting to the Longworth. Further information will be provided as it becomes available."

At 1:47 p.m., the department announced the evacuation was all clear.

"ALL CLEAR. The evacuation of the Cannon has been cleared, and any associated road closures will clear momentarily," the alert said. "Reentry is authorized."

Around 12:45 p.m., across from the Russell and Dirksen Senate office buildings, pro-Trump protesters gathered, cheering and chanting. Large screens were erected, playing Trump's speech, to cheers from the crowd. There was a heavy police presence, and temporary

fencing was set up at the edge of the driveways in front of the Capitol. Police were stationed inside the fencing in front of the Capitol building.

People were seen carrying Trump/Pence flags, American flags, Gadsden ("Don't tread on me") flags and signs that say things like "Do Not Certify." The crowds could be heard cheering and chanting a variety of phrases, including "Stop the steal" and "Fight for Trump." Near the House side of the Capitol, someone could be heard preaching earlier Wednesday morning.

One group declined to share their names or where they were staying, but they said they came as a group on a bus from Ohio.

Many protesters were wearing coats and jackets, but mask-wearing was sporadic.

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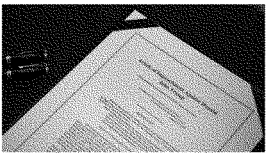

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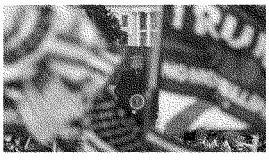

Despite calls, odds are against Trump's impeachment or removal using 25th Amendment

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Liz Cheney
HOUSE GOP CONFERENCE CHAIR

For Immediate Release:
January 12, 2021

Contact:
Jeremy Adler, 202-226-5421

Cheney: I Will Vote To Impeach The President

Washington - Wyoming Congresswoman and House Republican Conference Chair Liz Cheney (R-WY) released the following statement ahead of votes in the House this week:

"On January 6, 2021 a violent mob attacked the United States Capitol to obstruct the process of our democracy and stop the counting of presidential electoral votes. This insurrection caused injury, death and destruction in the most sacred space in our Republic.

"Much more will become clear in coming days and weeks, but what we know now is enough. The President of the United States summoned this mob, assembled the mob, and lit the flame of this attack. Everything that followed was his doing. None of this would have happened without the President. The President could have immediately and forcefully intervened to stop the violence. He did not. There has never been a greater betrayal by a President of the United States of his office and his oath to the Constitution.

"I will vote to impeach the President."

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POLITICS NEWS

Pro-Trump rioters smeared poop in U.S. Capitol hallways during belligerent attack

By CHRIS SOMMERFELDT
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS | JAN 07, 2021

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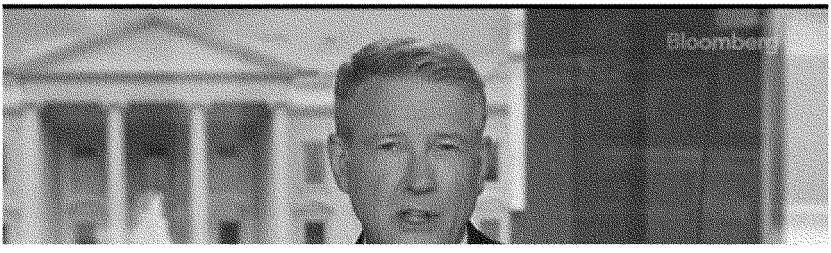

They took a dump on American democracy — literally.

Some of the unhinged pro-Trump rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday defecated inside the historic building and "tracked" their feces in several hallways, the Daily News has learned.

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A source close to Sen. Chuck Schumer said staffers to the New York Democrat found out about the fecal fiasco on Thursday.

The vile attackers, whose violent invasion of the Capitol left five people dead, apparently went No. 2 in a bathroom and then smeared their extremist excrement around the building, leaving behind brownish "foot-prints," the source said.

"It looked like they tracked it around," said the person.



Supporters of President Trump are confronted by Capitol Police officers outside the Senate Chamber inside the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday. (Manuel Balce Ceneta/AP)

The Trump-boosting poop putzes didn't just leave turds in their wake.

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Egged on by President Trump, the throngs of far-right rioters smashed windows, fought police officers and vandalized offices of lawmakers.

Trump, seemingly oblivious to the stain his presidency is leaving on U.S. history, cheered on the insurrectionists in a since-removed Twitter video. "We love you," he told them.

Schumer and dozens of other Democrats on Capitol Hill are calling for Trump to be impeached or removed via the 25th Amendment in light of his incitement of the riot.

The source said poop in Capitol hallways is the least of Schumer's problems at the moment.

"Schumer is dealing with proverbial s--t — not this kind," the source said.



Chris Sommerfeldt

Chris Sommerfeldt is a reporter covering national politics and the Trump administration. He started working for the Daily News in May 2015 as a city desk reporter.

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By NELSON DANE REWMAN, CHELSIA ROSE MARCIUS

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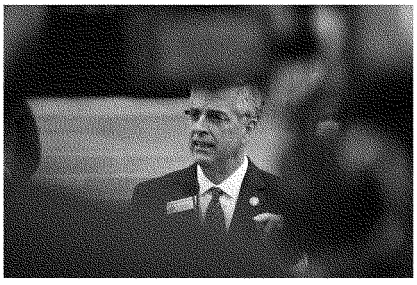
EXPLAINER: Is Georgia's upcoming ballot 'audit' a recount?

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY November 12, 2020



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AP FACT CHECK: Trump's call to action distorted in debate

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia says it's going to be tallying — by hand — nearly 5 million ballots that were cast in its very close presidential election on Nov. 3. But is it a recount? An "audit"? And why are they doing it?

It's all a bit confusing, but election experts say what's happening in Georgia

mean anything nefarious happened. Experts say some discrepancies are expected when so many votes are counted a second time using an entirely different method — hand versus machine.

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While President Donald Trump has been making unsubstantiated claims of fraud as he challenges the election's outcome, Georgia's secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, has defended the work of election officials in the state and said the review was unlikely to change the outcome. Unofficial results show Democrat Joe Biden leading Trump by about 14,000 votes.

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IS THIS AN OFFICIAL RECOUNT?

No. State election officials have said this is not a recount, but rather a post-election audit.

The main difference between the two: A recount is typically tied to a close margin in an election, whereas post-election audits are routine and used by states to ensure that equipment and procedures counting the vote all worked properly.

In Georgia, for instance, a recount is conducted using the same scanners that read and tallied the unofficial results already released. And recounts in Georgia generally take place after election results are certified by the state.

less than 0.5 percentage points. Biden currently leads by 0.28 percentage points, so Trump could still request a recount later.

SO WHAT IS GEORGIA DOING, THEN?

The post-election audit is being held under a new state law that required one to be conducted for the first time this year on a race of the secretary of state's choosing. Raffensperger said he selected the presidential contest given the "national significance of this race and the closeness of this race."

The specific type of audit that Georgia has chosen is known as "risk-limiting." It involves checking paper ballots against machine tallies to ensure the accuracy of those machines. This year was the first time Georgia used a fleet of ballot-marking, voting machines that produce a paper record of every ballot cast in person.

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Risk-limiting audits typically start with an initial sample of ballots. That sample increases depending on the level of discrepancies that are found. This kind of audit ends when either election officials reach a certain level of confidence that the outcome is correct or a full count has been performed. It is not meant to produce results that are an exact match to a previous tally.

But Georgia election officials say they will be reviewing every ballot to start. They say it will be easier for county officials to manage because the large number of ballots and the close margin are likely to result in a tally of every ballot anyway.

WAS THIS PROMPTED BY

widespread fraud with the Nov. 3 election. A top official said Thursday that the point of the audit was "to show the equipment scanned the ballots properly and the counts we got were the right counts."

Nevertheless, it's hard to ignore the high stakes surrounding the decision.

Before the decision to conduct the audit was announced, Trump allies in the state sent Raffensperger, a fellow Republican, a letter requesting that he order a hand recount before certifying the results. State election officials have said the decision to do the audit was being discussed prior to the letter.

In addition, Raffensperger has faced calls to resign by Georgia's two U.S. senators, both Trump supporters facing close runoff elections that could determine which party controls the U.S. Senate next year.

Full Coverage: Explaining Election 2020

WHEN DOES THIS BEGIN, AND HOW SOON WILL WE KNOW THE OUTCOME?

Counties must begin the process no later than 9 a.m. Friday, a week before the state's deadline to certify the election.

The state is asking for counties to complete the hand tally by Wednesday at 11:59 p.m. It's a tight turnaround time. Representatives from each party will be allowed to watch the process, although they will not be permitted to challenge any ballots.

State election officials said they would not be releasing interim tallies and would announce results after the hand tally was complete.

COULD VOTE TALLIES CHANGE?

Yes. Both election experts and the Georgia secretary of state's office have

more than likely," says Gabriel Sterling with the secretary's office.

Hand counts are generally less reliable than machine counts, according to Larry Norden, an elections expert with the Brennan Center for Justice. "Humans make mistakes," Norden says, adding that the margin between Biden and Trump meant it was unlikely that the overall outcome would change. "It's extremely unlikely you are going to find enough discrepancies to overcome 14,000 votes, and at the end of the day that is what matters."

State election officials have said the results of the hand tally will be used to ultimately certify the election.

Christina A. Cassidy covers voting and election security for The Associated Press. Follow her on Twitter at http://twitter.com/AP_Christina

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Ex-Trump Chief of Staff John Kelly supports 25th Amendment to remove president

bostonglobe.com/2021/01/07/metro/ex-trump-chief-staff-john-kelly-supports-25th-amendment-remove-president/

By Christine Mui Globe Correspondent,Updated January 7, 2021, 10:20 p.m. Email to a Friend Share on Facebook Share on Twitter Print this Article View Comments



Former White House chief of staff John Kelly said President Trump's Cabinet should consider invoking the 25th Amendment to the Constitution to remove the president from office after a violent mob of Trump supporters attacked the US Capitol Wednesday as Congress certified the results of the Nov. 3 election.

In an interview on CNN, Kelly, who also served in Trump's Cabinet as Homeland Security secretary, called Trump's behavior in recent months "outrageous" but doubts the Cabinet will act to remove him from office.

"I think, Jake, that the Cabinet should meet and have a discussion," Kelly said in an interview with CNN's Jake Tapper broadcast Thursday. "I don't think it'll happen, but I think the Cabinet should meet and discuss this because the behavior yesterday and in the weeks and months before,

they're just outrageous from the president. What happened on Capitol Hill yesterday is a direct result of his poisoning the minds of people with the lies and the fraud."

Kelly's comments came on a day when a growing number of current and other former members of Trump's Cabinet and staff called for his removal. The president incited hundreds of rioters dressed in Trump flags and hats that broke into the Capitol as a joint session of Congress certified the electoral college votes for President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

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If he were still a Cabinet member, Kelly, a retired four-star general who grew up in Brighton, said he would vote to remove Trump.

"Yes, I would," Kelly said in response to a question from Tapper.

He went on to say that with less than two weeks left in his term, Trump is losing influence among his Cabinet and fellow Republicans. He singled out Vice President Mike Pence, who rejected pressure from Trump to overturn the election results.

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"He can give all the orders he wants, and no one is going to break the law, and we saw Mike Pence, Vice President Pence, stand his ground yesterday," Kelly said.

Christine Mui can be reached at christine.mui@globe.com.

A Capitol Police Officer On Duty During The Coup Attempt Has Died By Suicide

buzzfeednews.com/article/claudiakoerner/capitol-police-suicide



Tom Williams / Roll Call / Getty Images
Officer Howard Liebengood at a "Kid Safety Day" event in 2008

A US Capitol Police officer on duty during Wednesday's coup attempt by Trump supporters died by suicide on Saturday, his family has announced.

Officer Howard Liebengood, 51, had been assigned to the Senate Division and joined the department in 2005.

Barry Pollack, a lawyer for Liebengood's family, told BuzzFeed News the officer had been at the Capitol during the insurrection.

"His death is a tragedy that has deprived all of us a dedicated public servant," Pollack said. "His family has suffered a devastating loss and asks that they be given space to grieve in private."

His death came days after an attempted coup by violent Trump supporters left a fellow Capitol Police officer dead. Officer Brian Sicknick was injured while "physically engaging" with rioters and later died at a hospital.

According to CBS News, several Capitol Police officers have threatened self-harm in the days following the riot.

The union representing the Capitol Police said the dead officers' service will not be forgotten.

"We are reeling from the death of Officer Liebengood," Gus Papathanasiou, chair of the Capitol Police Labor Committee, said in a statement. "Every Capitol Police Officer puts the security of others before their own safety and Officer Liebengood was an example of the selfless service that is the hallmark of USCP."

Members of Congress also remembered Liebengood.



Mitt Romney @MittRomney

At his post in the Russell building, Howie was a familiar and cheerful presence, and also a friend to me and my staff, many of whom have known him for years. His bravery, kindness, and genuine care for others was deeply felt by all of us who had the privilege of knowing him.

06:25 PM - 11 Jan 2021

Reply Retweet Favorite

Twitter: @MittRomney

"He was friendly, professional, and dedicated to the job," Sen. Roy Blunt said in a statement Sunday. "I appreciate everything he did to keep us safe."

Rep. Dean Phillips said he mourned Liebengood, but he also called for accountability for the failures in Wednesday's response.

"Our officers need more than gratitude," he said in a tweet. "They need authentic, capable leadership and meaningful support, and I call on my colleagues to join me demanding it immediately."

Others also remembered Liebengood as a friendly face within the Capitol building.



Ian Koski @iankoski

This is Officer Liebengood — Howie — at a shift change in December 2014. Senators Coons and Blunt, and their staffs, would make and bring cookies over every year to mark the holidays and express our gratitude. He was a real person and a good guy, and this is a terrible tragedy.

04:31 PM - 10 Jan 2021

Reply Retweet Favorite

Twitter: @iankoski



Nancy Cordes @nancycordes

I'll remember Howard Liebengood as a truly friendly Capitol Police officer who always had a smile on his face and a kind word to share, even at 6:45 in the morning. Tragic.

https://t.co/6z3FLaZFPr

03:59 PM - 10 Jan 2021

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Twitter: @nancycordes

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255. Other international suicide helplines can be found at befrienders.org. You can also text TALK to 741741 for free, anonymous 24/7 crisis support in the US from the Crisis Text Line.

Committees Open Review of Insurrection at Capitol and Threats to Stop Peaceful Transition of Power

intelligence.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx

January 16, 2021



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Press Releases

Committees Send Requests for Documents and Briefings to FBI, DHS, NCTC and ODNI

Washington, DC – Today, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, the Committee on Homeland Security, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Oversight and Reform sent a letter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis, the National Counterterrorism Center, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence requesting relevant documents and briefings as part of a review of the events and intelligence surrounding the insurrection on January 6th incited by President Trump, and related threats against the nation's peaceful transition of power, including the Inauguration.

The Committees plan to review what the Intelligence Community and federal law enforcement knew about the threats of violence, whether that information was shared or not, and whether the threats had any nexus to foreign influence or misinformation efforts. Additionally, the Committees plan to examine whether any current or former holders of security clearances or those who held positions involving U.S. national security, defense, justice or homeland security participated in the insurrection. Finally, the Committees will examine the federal response to the insurrection and domestic violent extremism in the wake of this attack.

In the letter, Intelligence Committee Chair Adam Schiff (D-CA), Committee on Homeland Security Chair Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS), Judiciary Committee Chair Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) and Committee on Oversight and Reform Chair Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY) wrote:

The Committees will conduct robust oversight to understand what warning signs may have been missed, determine whether there were systemic failures, and consider how to best address countering domestic violent extremism, including remedying any gaps in legislation or policy.

...

Security and logistical preparations before January 6 were not consistent with the prospect of serious and widespread violence. Yet, according to media accounts that have surfaced in recent days, federal and other authorities earlier on possessed — and may have shared with some parties — intelligence and other information forecasting a dire security threat against the Congress's meeting to certify the election results. These latter reports, if acted upon, might have prompted more extensive planning for the event, and the infusion of far greater security and other resources.

Tragically that did not happen.

...

This still-emerging story is one of astounding bravery by some U.S. Capitol Police and other officers; of staggering treachery by violent criminals; and of apparent and high-level failures — in particular, with respect to intelligence and security preparedness.

The full letter can be found here, or read below:

Dear Director Wray, Acting Director Vanech, Mr. Maher, and Director Ratcliffe:

The American people continue to learn disturbing details about the horrific insurrection at the U.S. Capitol and surrounding area on January 6, and the growing public record is still far from complete. The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (the "Committee" or "HPSCI"), the Committee on Homeland Security, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Oversight and Reform (collectively, the "Committees"), in exercise of their legislative and oversight jurisdictions, are reviewing the events of January 6 and related threats against the Nation's peaceful transition of power. The Committees will conduct robust oversight to understand what warning signs may have been missed, determine whether there were systemic failures, and consider how to best address countering domestic violent extremism, including remedying any gaps in legislation or policy.

As a first step, and as described in the annex to this letter, the Committees ask that your organizations produce relevant documents, and schedule briefings, regarding specific intelligence matters associated with the insurrection and threats to the U.S. presidential inauguration.

***

Security and logistical preparations before January 6 were not consistent with the prospect of serious and widespread violence. Yet, according to media accounts that have surfaced in recent days, federal and other authorities earlier on possessed — and may have shared with some parties — intelligence and other information forecasting a dire security threat

against the Congress's meeting to certify the election results. These latter reports, if acted upon, might have prompted more extensive planning for the event, and the infusion of far greater security and other resources.

Tragically that did not happen. Emboldened by President Trump's inciteful rhetoric and his false claims of a stolen election — at the National Mall that day and for weeks before — a pack of violent insurrectionists forced their way into the Capitol complex with the intent to stop Congress from discharging its constitutional duties to certify the results of the presidential election. The mob caused extensive damage to persons and property. They assaulted woefully under-resourced U.S. Capitol Police officers and other security personnel, a great many of whom bravely resisted. They reportedly tried to steal one officer's gun, hoping to kill him with it, and injured another causing his death. They brought firearms, ammunition, explosives, tactical gear, and zip ties to detain potential victims. Some of them reportedly planned to take hostages and harm lawmakers. Among the riotous mob were suspected domestic violent extremists, including neo-Nazis, white supremacists, anti-government militia, and, most shockingly, current as well as former law enforcement officers and former military servicemembers.

This still-emerging story is one of astounding bravery by some U.S. Capitol Police and other officers; of staggering treachery by violent criminals; and of apparent and high-level failures — in particular, with respect to intelligence and security preparedness.

The Committees therefore request the records and briefings described in the annex attached hereto in pursuit of the following inquiries:

> What elements of the Intelligence Community ("IC") and federal law enforcement knew about threats of violence and destruction before, during, and after the insurrection; whether such information was shared with appropriate personnel and if so, how; whether any information was paused, delayed or withheld; and whether the insurrection had any nexus to foreign influence or misinformation efforts, and to what degree foreign powers have sought to exploit and aggravate the crisis;
>
> Whether any current or former holders of security clearances and/or of positions in U.S. national security, justice, defense or homeland security organizations participated in the insurrection; and
>
> The policy and other responses to the insurrection, to include any measures to identify, apprehend or prevent the travel of those who committed crimes, including any Domestic Violent Extremists.

***

The Committees expect and appreciate your full cooperation with this matter – while of course recognizing that resources appropriately and immediately must be allocated to efforts to counter any continuing threats to the transfer of power, including the presidential inauguration and related activities. The Committees stand ready to work with you to arrange for the requested production of documents and briefings.

###

Congressman Kinzinger Statement on Impeachment

kinzinger.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx

January 12, 2021

Press Releases

f t
Washington, DC, January 12, 2021 | Maura Gillespie (12022253635) | comments

> Congressman Adam Kinzinger (IL-16) released the following statement ahead of the House votes on impeachment.
> share: f t

Washington, DC – Congressman Adam Kinzinger (IL-16) released the following statement ahead of the House votes on impeachment:

"Throughout my time in Congress, I've sought to do the right thing for the good of the people I represent and for the country as a whole. We are in unchartered waters here, and in a moment in history we have not experienced in modern times.

"On January 6, 2021, the President of the United States encouraged an angry mob to storm the United States Capitol to stop the counting of electoral votes. This angry mob turned violent and caused destruction to our nation's symbol of democracy. This insurrection led to countless injuries and the death of several people, including two of our U.S. Capitol Police Officers.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the President of the United States broke his oath of office and incited this insurrection. He used his position in the Executive to attack the Legislative. So in assessing the articles of impeachment brought before the House, I must consider: if these actions--the Article II branch inciting a deadly insurrection against the Article I branch--are not worthy of impeachment, then what is an impeachable offense?

"I will vote in favor of impeachment."

f t

CONGRESSMAN MO BROOKS REBUTS VICIOUS & SCURRILOUS FAKE NEWS MEDIA AND SOCIALIST DEMOCRAT ATTACKS

January 12, 2021 | Press Release

Washington, DC— Tuesday, Congressman Mo Brooks (AL-05) issued the below statement in response to scurrilous Fake News Media and Socialist Democrat attacks related to his January 6th "Save America" rally speech:

As one of America's most effective conservative leaders, I defend my honor and reputation against scurrilous, George Orwellian, 1984, Socialist Democrats Politics of Personal Destruction, the same attack strategy used in 2012 against then-presidential candidate Mitt Romney, and nonstop against President Trump with false Russian Collusion charges and the 2019 sham impeachment effort.

Let's be clear, this entire smear campaign is about intimidating, censoring and suppressing the ability of American citizens to fight at the ballot box the efforts of Socialist Democrats to seize control of the United States of America.

So that I am unambiguously clear, American citizens' recourse is at the ballot box (maybe this comment will deter Socialist Democrats and Fake News Media from again shrilly shouting false claims of violence advocacy).

As you read these remarks, I ask that you consider two quotes.

First, as Jesus said in the Bible, John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free".

Second, I quote the words of American patriot Martin Luther King, who stated in 1958 that, "True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice."

I ask the Members of Congress, the citizens of the great State of Alabama, and the citizens of America, to bear these words in mind, set their political stridency aside, and strive for justice.

Before I get into the meat of my remarks, let me add that January 6 was supposed to be a day of great debate on the floors of the House and Senate about voter fraud and election theft that is supposed to propel America to more honest or accurate elections.

Instead, our message was hijacked by people whose illegal breach of the Capitol did a great disservice to our cause and America.

Those who engaged in illegal conduct should be ashamed of themselves because their attack on the U.S. Capitol destroyed two months of debate and work.

Those who engaged in the illegal breach of the U.S. Capitol could not have done more damage if they had followed any script written by the Democrat National Committee.

I take great offense at anyone who suggests I am so politically inexperienced as to want to torpedo my honest and accurate election system effort I spent months fighting on.

Mo Brooks Background

Let me share a little about myself. My long-time acquaintances and family would describe me as a straight arrow or a "square".

I have never smoked tobacco.

I don't consume alcohol.

I have never taken illegal drugs.

I have never been accused or convicted of any felonies or misdemeanors.

In half a century of driving, I have never had a DUI, a reckless driving ticket or even a speeding ticket.

I did once misjudge a traffic light and deservedly got a ticket, but that is it.

I have never had a vehicle wreck in which anyone claimed I was at fault.

My parents raised me to be a good, self-supporting citizen and I have strived to be just that.

My parents also encouraged me to participate in government if the opportunity arose, as this was a part of my ancestry.

On my mother's side, we have a North Carolina ancestral history that includes a county sheriff, a state legislator, a board of education member, a road commissioner, and the like.

In fact, the first rest stop you come to on I-40 when you enter North Carolina from Tennessee is named after my grandfather, D. Reeves Noland.

I am proud of that ancestry. I have tried to follow it.

As such, I have served the public for 36 years as a Tuscaloosa assistant district attorney, an Alabama legislator, the Madison County District Attorney, a county commissioner, and U.S. Congressman.

In my 36 years as a public servant, I have a perfect ethics record, having never been found guilty of an ethics violation, large or small.

I am proud that, in 1982, I was the first Republican legislator ever elected in Alabama House District 18.

I am proud that, in 1983, I was the first Republican legislator ever elected in Alabama House District 10.

I am proud that, in 2010, I was the first Republican elected in Alabama Congressional District 5 in more than 130 years.

I am proud that, in the history of the State of Alabama, no person has successfully carried the Republican banner in general elections more than I have.

You can imagine my dismay upon learning that Socialist Democrats, without ever even bothering to first discuss this matter with me to discern the truth, and without any substantive and connective evidence, so viciously besmirch my good name and character that took 66 years to build.

It is with that as a background, that I will address how misplaced and malevolent the motives are of those who falsely accuse me of bad conduct.

Accusation Flaw #1:

Mr. Malinowski, in his Censure Resolution, alleges that "Representative Mo Brooks addressed a rally in Washington, DC, attended by numerous members of known extremist and anti-government groups, including the Proud Boys, QAnon, Boogaloo Boys, and Oathkeepers, who would shortly thereafter march to seize the United States Capitol"

That statement is meaningless because it omits a key fact. Mr. Malinowski fails to allege I knew any of that!

Why? Because I did not know any of that.

For the record, I have never knowingly associated or communicated with any of those groups in my life and I certainly had no inkling any of these groups were a part of the Trump rally at the Ellipse. Perhaps, at some political event, I have had a photo with one, or a five second conversation with another, but, if so, I don't recall it and paid no attention to it.

Per my cell phone records, on Tuesday morning, January 5, I had a telephone call with Brian Jack, White House Political Director. He asked me to speak at the Trump rally the next day, Wednesday morning.

I had never attended a Trump rally in my life but had seen many on TV, and thought it an honor for the White House to invite me to address Trump volunteers and supporters, so I readily agreed.

Due to lack of time, I did not draft my speech from scratch.

The bulk of my January 6 White House Ellipse speech comes from my often-used "America is Great" political speeches that I have given dozens of times, perhaps hundreds of times, in my 34 years of public service as a Tuscaloosa assistant district attorney, an Alabama legislator, the Madison County District Attorney, a county commissioner, and U.S. Congressman.

Further, I spoke very early in the political rally. There was music, there was my speech, there was more music, then there was some number of speakers, then a couple hours or so later, President Trump began speaking.

I ask this question, if my remarks were as inspirational as the Socialist Democrats and their Fake News Media allies want the public to believe, why didn't the Trump rally participants, after my remarks, immediately get up and storm the Capitol?

Why not indeed! The answer is simple. No one at the rally interpreted my remarks to be anything other than what they were: A pep talk after the derriere kicking conservatives suffered in the dismal 2020 elections.

As I will prove later, my remarks were clearly designed to reinvigorate people for the 2022 election cycle that had already begun two months ago and is now only a year away.

Accusation Flaw #2:

Mr. Malinoski's Censure resolution alleges, "Whereas, Representative Brooks then exhorted the audience: "Today is the day American patriots start taking down names and kicking ass".

While I did utter those words, what is deceitfully omitted is the immediately preceding sentence, that begins with, "But let's be clear, regardless of today's outcome, the 2022 and the 2024 elections are right around the corner."

This preceding sentence, clearly and unambiguously confirms that my "take names and kicking derrieres" remarks refers to fighting to win elections in 2022 and 2024 and had absolutely nothing to do with the illegal breach of the Capitol that occurred later in the day.

Notably, Mr. Malinoski's Censure Resolution deceitfully omits the key introductory clause of the "take names" sentence that confirms what I just said. After focusing on winning the 2022 and 2024 elections, the beginning of the next sentence is "As such". "As such, today is the day American patriots start taking down names and kicking as."

The phrase "As such" confirms that my "take names" sentence is in the context of the preceding 2022 and 2024 sentence and that I was encouraging people to join our fight to win the 2022 & 2024 elections "Today".

I was not encouraging anyone to engage in violence. I was encouraging people to begin a 2022 and 2024 election fight!

Accusation Flaw #3.

Mr. Malinoski's Censure Resolution alleges I "encouraged and incited violence against his fellow Members of Congress, as part of an assault on the United States Capitol."

That statement is utterly false and beyond contempt.

In addition to the foregoing rebuttals, consider the following:

1. I was in the House Chamber when the attack began! The idea that I would encourage and incite violence" on myself, my friends, and my colleagues is absurd.

2. The Censure resolution (and the Fake News Media) conveniently and deceitfully omit the action I asked rally attendees to undertake: take WORDS (not violence) to the Capitol!

At the start of my speech, I tell the audience quote, "I've got a message that I need you to take to your heart, and take back home, and along the way stop at the Capitol."

My message is NOT violence, it is WORDS. Only the most malevolent or partisan of people would construe my speech otherwise.

At the very end of my speech, I emphasize that:

"What are the simple words we must shout to the heavens and carry, the message, to Capitol Hill? What are the words that cause Socialists and weak-kneed Republicans on Capitol Hill to shake in their boots and cower in their foxholes?

What are the words that scare the hell out of Socialists and weak-kneed Republicans alike?

Join with me! USA! USA! USA! USA! USA! USA! USA! Washington! America! Heed those words, because we're going to carry them right to you.

That is right. I exhorted the Trump rally attendees to bring words, NOT VIOLENCE, to the U.S. Capitol.

And those words are USA, USA, USA.

3. Mr. Malinowski and the Censure Resolution deceitfully attributes to me things that are absolutely false. It asserts, with no credible evidence, a linkage between my words and the illegal breach of the Capitol.

Let me emphasize something in that regard. I have proudly served the people of the Great State of Alabama for 34 years.

I have given hundreds if not thousands of political speeches. I have given dozens if not hundreds of political rally speeches. Not once in those 34 years of speech-giving has anyone been incited to violence. Not once!

As far as I knew, the Trump rally attendees were patriotic Americans who wished to exercise their Constitutional right to freely assemble, freely speak, and freely exercise their Constitutionally guaranteed right to protest.

Certainly, as far as I am aware (and granted I have never previously attended one), no prior Trump rally resulted in violence.

4. I made my speech in front of a bank of TV cameras. The notion that I would give a recorded speech calling for riots and violence is the height of arrogance and stupidity. I called for fighting in the 2022 and 2024 elections

5. The growing evidence is that various Militant groups came to Washington, DC on January 6 to engage in violent acts regardless of speech content.

For example, Mr. Malinowski's Censure Resolution claims that militant, "extremist and anti-government groups, including the Proud Boys, QAnon, Boogaloo Boys, and Oathkeepers", helped "seize the United States Capitol".

One or more of these groups brought pipe bombs, firearms, and other explosive devices with them.

This level or preparation is evidence that violent actions were planned long before my remarks. Ergo, my remarks had nothing to do with the ensuing violent acts.

WHY?

The reckless, defamatory, and deceitful nature of the Censure Resolution begs the question of why would Socialist Democrats go to such lengths to deceitfully slander and defame the reputation of an honorable member of the opposition party?

Perhaps I can share a few very plausible motives.

Motive #1: Hypocrisy.

There is no end to the hypocrisy of Socialist Democrats who are so often willing to condemn what they themselves do!

I submit the following quotes, and the absence of any Censureship efforts regarding them, as evidence of how hypocritical this Censure Resolution is.

In 2019, Congressman Joaquin Castro stated, "We'll also fight him [Trump] ... in the streets!"

In 2020, Congresswoman Maxine Waters stated, "And if you see anybody from that Cabinet in a restaurant, in a department store, at a gasoline station, you get out and you create a crowd, and you push back on them. And you tell them they're not welcome anymore, anywhere."

In 2018, former Attorney General Eric Holder stated, "Michelle [Obama] always says that, you know, 'When they go low, we go high.' No. When they go low, we kick them. That's what this new Democratic Party is about,"

In 2020, Vice-President Elect Kamala Harris encouraged people to help post bail out for violent protestors in Minnesota when she posted, ""If you're able to, chip in now to the @MNFreedomFund to help post bail for those protesting on the ground in Minnesota."

In 2020, Congresswoman Cori Bush stated, "We DISRUPT PEACE because lives are on the line. NO, I won't coddle you or baby you by giving you a peaceful protest. Get a backbone- get some fight in you! We're putting our lives on the line because black people are and IT STOPS NOW!! NO JUSTICE NO PEACE!!"

If Socialist Democrats were really concerned about stopping the violence, then why do they encourage, rather than discourage, the violence, the looting, the arson, the killings by Black Lives Matter or fascist ANTIFA?

Socialist Democrats are not motivated by justice. They are motivated by political advantage.

Socialist Democrats acquiesce to violence they believe helps them at the polls and engage in fake, manipulative politics when they believe the violence hurts them at the polls.

In contrast, I oppose all violence of the kind we saw last week at the U.S. Capitol and have, as such and on numerous occasions, called for aggressive prosecution of every person who illegally breached Capitol security, regardless of their political motivation for doing so.

Motive #2:

I have evolved into a national leader in the:

Fight against dictatorial Socialism and fight for free enterprise and the freedom and liberty on which freedom is based.

Fight against the killing of unborn babies and fight for life.

Fight against unsustainable deficits that threaten America's solvency and fight for financial responsibility that threatens to cut off a reliable Socialist Democrat block vote: those people on welfare who prefer to vote for a living rather than work for one.

Fight against Big Tech censorship and Socialist Democrats' suppression of free speech and fight for freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and the right to bear arms.

Fight against the voter fraud and election theft so many Socialist Democrats rely on to get elected and fight for honest and accurate elections.

The burden of being a national leader in the fight for the foundational values that have combined to make America the greatest nation in world history is being a target of deceitful Socialist Democrat politics of personal destruction.

But know this, I am from the Great State of Alabama, where our motto is "We Dare Defend our Rights".

Socialist Democrats and their Fake News Media Allies won't get an apology from me because my remarks were not wrong. Conversely, the Socialist Democrats and their Fake News Media Allies should be apologizing to the public for the egregiously and manipulative way they have deceived the public on this issue.

Rest assured; I will never apologize for fighting to win our causes at the ballot box. That is the American way!

I conclude with two famous quotes.

The first is from Jesus, in the King James Bible, Matthew, Chapter 7, Verse 2: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

I recommend everyone take these words to heart and very carefully consider them.

The second is from American patriot Martin Luther King, in his Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963:

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

###

JANUARY 06, 2021

COTTON STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE AT CAPITOL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Caroline Tabler or James Arnold (202) 224-2353

January 6, 2021

Cotton Statement on Violence at Capitol

Washington, D.C. — Senator Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas) released the following statement after violence broke out at the U.S. Capitol earlier today:

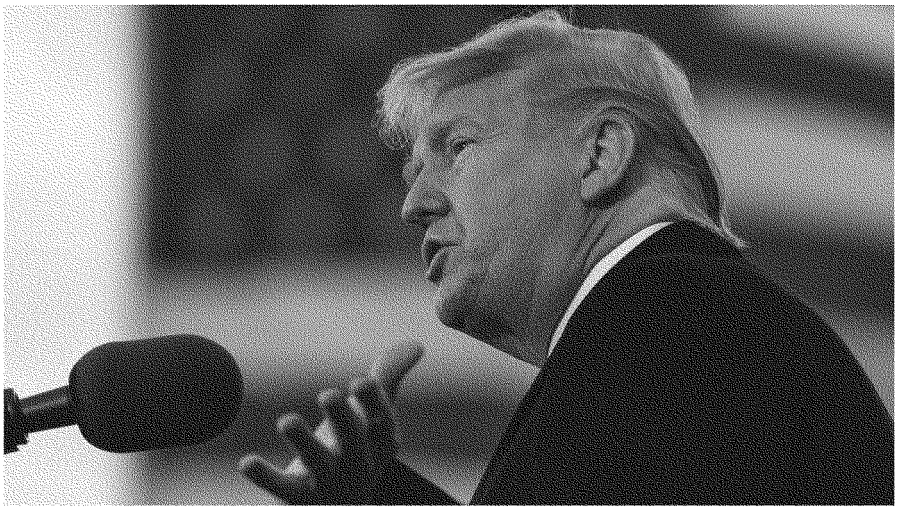
"Last summer, as insurrection gripped the streets, I called to send in the troops if necessary to restore order. Today, insurrectionists occupied our Capitol. Fortunately, the Capitol Police and other law-enforcement agencies restored order without the need for federal troops. But the principle remains the same: no quarter for insurrectionists. Those who attacked the Capitol today should face the full extent of federal law.

It's past time for the president to accept the results of the election, quit misleading the American people, and repudiate mob violence. And the senators and representatives who fanned the flames by encouraging the president and leading their supporters to believe that their objections could reverse the election results should withdraw those objections. In any event, the Congress will complete its constitutional responsibilities tonight."

###

Donald Trump called Monica Palmer after Wayne County Board of Canvassers meeting

freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2020/11/19/trump-monica-palmer-wayne-canvassers-certification-election/3776190001/



Clara Hendrickson, Detroit Free Press Published 10:40 a.m. ET Nov. 19, 2020 | Updated 7:35 p.m. ET Nov. 19, 2020

Rev. Wendell Anthony, pastor of Fellowship Chapel and head of Detroit NAACP, speaks during Nov. 17, 2020, meeting of Wayne County Board of Canvassers. Detroit Free Press

Monica Palmer, the Republican chairwoman of the Wayne County Board of Canvassers who initially voted on Tuesday against certifying the county's election results, then reversed her vote, said Thursday she received a phone call from President Donald Trump Tuesday evening after the meeting ended.

Palmer said she did not know how long the call lasted, saying there was a lot of stress and adrenaline that night.

"He was checking to make sure I was safe after seeing/hearing about the threats and doxxing," Palmer wrote in a text message, referring to a firestorm of information released about her on social media.

Palmer earlier told the Free Press her family had "received multiple threats." "The threats have been made against myself, my daughter and my husband," she said. "Reports have been filed with Grosse Pointe Woods police and the FBI."

More: Trump withdraws federal lawsuit in Michigan, citing Wayne County canvasser affidavits

Ryan Jarvi, a spokesman for Attorney General Dana Nessel, said her office had not received a referral about such threats from a police agency, but would act quickly if such a referral is made.

William Hartmann, the other Republican member of the four-person Wayne County board who also initially voted not to certify, also spoke with Trump, the Associated Press reported. The Free Press could not reach him for comment.

Both board members signed affidavits late Wednesday saying they want to rescind their votes to certify the county's election results because they do not feel the state will follow through with an audit.



William Hartmann left talks with Monica Palmer as the Wayne County Board of Canvassers meets to certify the election results. After what was an unprecedented 2-2 deadlock along partisan lines, with the two Republican members of the Wayne County Board of Canvassers voting against certifying the county's November election results, the board unanimously voted to certify the results late Tuesday night. (Photo: Michigan United)

On Tuesday, when the board first took up a motion to certify the county's election results, the vote came out 2-2 — deadlocked along partisan lines, with the Republicans opposing certification.

Palmer offered a compromise: "I would be open to a motion to certify communities other than the city of Detroit."

An hours-long public comment period followed where the Republican members of the board were called racist for disenfranchising hundreds of thousands of Black voters.

At the end of the meeting, Jonathan Kinloch, the Democratic vice chair, offered a resolution to certify the county's election results that called on Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson to conduct a comprehensive audit of the county's precincts that recorded unexplained discrepancies between the number of ballots recorded as cast and the number of ballots counted.

The board unanimously supported Kinloch's resolution.

More: GOP members of Wayne County Board of Canvassers say they want to rescind votes to certify

More: What persuaded the GOP members of Wayne County Board of Canvassers to reverse course

Throughout the meeting, Trump continued his quest for victories in states that he lost at the ballot box, making dubious claims to a procedural win in Michigan. He falsely claimed in a tweet that "Michigan just refused to certify the election results." Trump appeared to have confused the Board of State Canvassers with the Wayne County Board of Canvassers. The members of the state board are scheduled to meet Monday to vote on certifying Michigan's election results.

In response to a statement put out by Michigan Republican Party chair Laura Cox praising the Republican members of the board just minutes after they voted against certifying the county's election results, Trump tweeted, "Well, it's really quite simple. You just can't have more votes than people!"

The discrepancies found in Wayne County were minor and elections experts say they are common across the country and the result of human error. They do not indicate that individuals voted multiple times or that ballots were counted more than once.

In a follow-up tweet Wednesday morning, Trump wrote, "In Detroit, there are FAR MORE VOTES THAN PEOPLE. Nothing can be done to cure that giant scam. I win Michigan!"

Detroit's unofficial election results show roughly 250,000 Detroiters voted in November's election. Roughly 500,000 people are registered to vote in the city.

Clara Hendrickson fact-checks Michigan issues and politics as a corps member with Report for America, an initiative of The GroundTruth Project. Contact her at chendrickson@freepress.com or 313-296-5743 for comments or to suggest a fact-check.

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FBI warns of plans for nationwide armed protests next week

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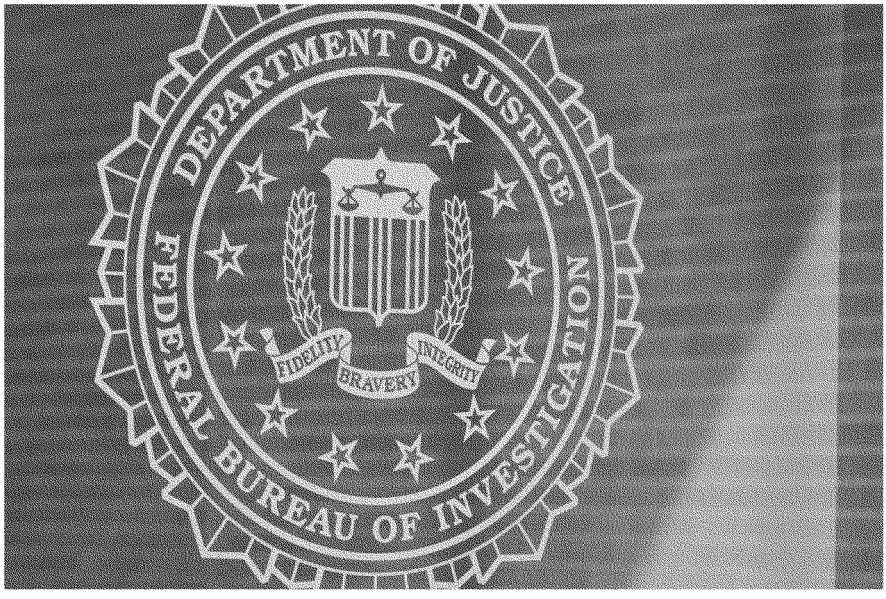

The FBI logo. | Jessica McGowan/Getty Images

By ASSOCIATED PRESS
01/11/2021 03:06 PM EST

The FBI is warning of plans for armed protests at all 50 state capitals and in Washington in the days leading up to President-election Joe Biden's inauguration, stoking fears of more bloodshed after last week's deadly siege at the U.S. Capitol.

An internal FBI bulletin warned that, as of Sunday, the nationwide protests may start later this week and extend through Biden's Jan. 20 inauguration, according to two law enforcement officials who read details of the memo to The Associated Press. Investigators believe some of the people are members of some extremist groups, the officials said. The bulletin was first reported by ABC.

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"Armed protests are being planned at all 50 state capitols from 16 January through at least 20 January, and at the U.S. Capitol from 17 January through 20 January," the bulletin said, according to one official. The officials were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The FBI issued at least one other bulletin — they go out to law enforcement nationwide on the topic — before the riots last week. On Dec. 29, it warned of the potential for armed demonstrators targeting legislatures, the second official said.

Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, told reporters on Monday that the Guard is also looking at any issues across the country

country,

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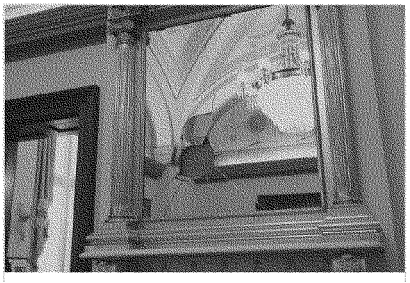

1 LEGAL

FBI investigating whether woman stole laptop from Pelosi's office to sell it to Russia



2 THE BIG IDEA

30 Things Donald Trump Did as President You Might Have Missed

3

"We're keeping a look across the entire country to make sure that we're monitoring, and that our Guards in every state are in close coordination with their local law enforcement agencies to provide any support requested."

The riots followed weeks of online calls for violence in Washington in the waning days of Donald Trump's presidency.

A tweet in which Trump promised that last Wednesday's event "will be wild" fueled a "month-long frenzy of incitements, strategizing, and embrace of violence against lawmakers," according to a research group that tracks online extremism activity, In a report issued Saturday, the SITE Intelligence Group also warns that the Capitol attack has emboldened Trump-supporting extremists.

"No matter how all this plays out, its only the beginning," posted a user on TheDonald message board, according to the report.

FILED UNDER: JOE BIDEN, JOE BIDEN 2020, FBI, JAN. 6 CAPITOL RIOT

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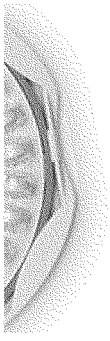

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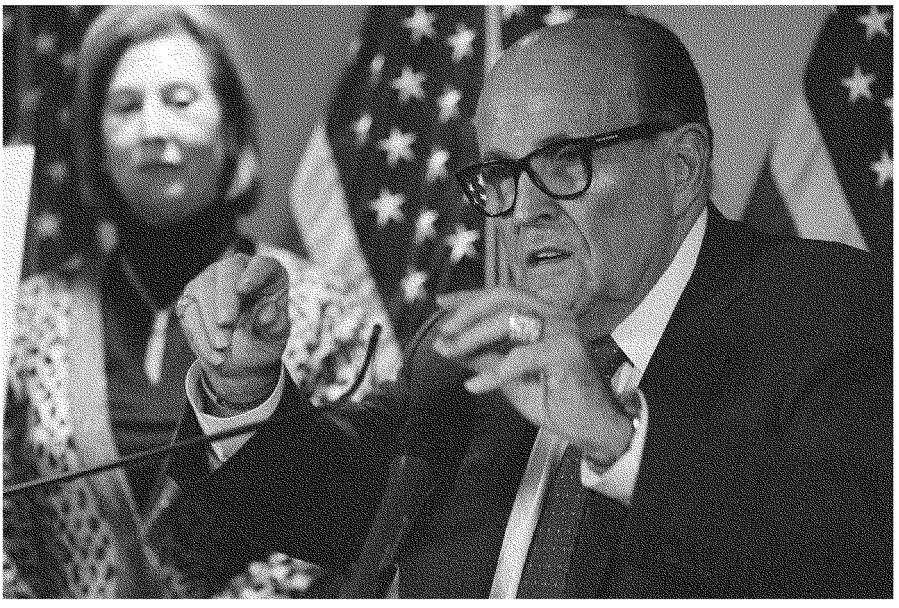
Trump, allies make frantic steps to overturn Biden victory

AP apnews.com/article/trump-allies-try-overturn-biden-victory-29da6aac9cc41e47f3095855e7af7031

November 19, 2020



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By COLLEEN LONG, ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and DAVID EGGERTNovember 19, 2020 GMT

1 of 8

Former Mayor of New York Rudy Giuliani, a lawyer for President Donald Trump, speaks during a news conference at the Republican National Committee headquarters, Thursday Nov. 19, 2020, in Washington. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

1 of 8

Former Mayor of New York Rudy Giuliani, a lawyer for President Donald Trump, speaks during a news conference at the Republican National Committee headquarters, Thursday Nov. 19, 2020, in Washington. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and his allies are taking increasingly frantic steps to subvert the results of the 2020 election, including summoning state legislators to the White House as part of a longshot bid to overturn Joe Biden's victory.

Among other last-ditch tactics: personally calling local election officials who are trying to rescind their certification votes in Michigan, suggesting in a legal challenge that Pennsylvania set aside the popular vote there and pressuring county officials in Arizona to delay certifying vote tallies.

Election law experts see it as the last, dying gasps of the Trump campaign and say Biden is certain to walk into the Oval Office come January. But there is great concern that Trump's effort is doing real damage to public faith in the integrity of U.S. elections.

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"It's very concerning that some Republicans apparently can't fathom the possibility that they legitimately lost this election," said Joshua Douglas, a law professor at the University of Kentucky who researches and teaches election law.

"We depend on democratic norms, including that the losers graciously accept defeat," he said. "That seems to be breaking down."

Trump's own election security agency has declared the 2020 presidential election to have been the most secure in history. Days after that statement was issued, Trump fired the agency's leader.

The increasingly desperate and erratic moves have no reasonable chance of changing the outcome of the 2020 election, where Biden has now received more votes than any other presidential candidate in history and has clinched the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win.

But the president's constant barrage of baseless claims, his work to personally sway local officials who certify votes and his allies' refusal to admit he lost is likely to have a lasting negative impact on the country. Legions of his supporters don't believe he lost.

"It's about trying to set up the conditions where half of the country believes that there are only two possibilities, either they win or the election was stolen," said Justin Levitt, a constitutional law scholar and professor at Loyola Law School. "And that's not a democracy."

The two GOP canvassers in Michigan's Wayne County said in a statement late Wednesday they lacked confidence that the election was fair and impartial. "There has been a distinct lack of transparency throughout the process," they said. But there has been no evidence of impropriety or fraud in Michigan, election officials have said.

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Trump's allies have homed in on the way that the president's early lead in Michigan and some other states on Election Night slipped away as later votes came, casting it as evidence of something nefarious.

But a massive influx of mail-in ballots because of the coronavirus pandemic leaned largely to Biden, who encouraged his supporters to vote by mail, and those votes were the last to be counted. So it appeared Trump had an edge when he really didn't.

In fact, Biden crushed Trump in Wayne County, a Democratic stronghold that includes Detroit, by a more than 2-1 margin on his way to winning Michigan by 154,000 votes, according to unofficial results.

Earlier this week, the county's two Republicans canvassers blocked the certification of votes there. They later relented and the results were certified. But a person familiar with the matter said Trump reached out to the canvassers, Monica Palmer and William Hartmann, on Tuesday evening after the revised vote to express gratitude for their support. Then, on Wednesday, Palmer and Hartmann signed affidavits saying they believed the county vote "should not be certified."

They cannot rescind their votes, according to the Michigan secretary of state. The four-member state canvassing board is expected to meet Monday and also is split with two Democrats and two Republicans.

Trump appears intent on pushing the issue. He has invited Michigan's Republican legislative leaders, Senate Majority Mike Shirkey and House Speaker Lee Chatfield, to the White House, according to two officials familiar with the matter who were not authorized to speak publicly. The two have agreed to go, according to one official, but they haven't commented publicly, and it's not clear what the purpose of the meeting is.

The Michigan Legislature would be called on to select electors if Trump succeeded in convincing the state's board of canvassers not to certify Biden's 154,000-vote victory in the state. But both legislative leaders have indicated they will not try to overturn Biden's win.

Full Coverage: Election 2020
"Michigan law does not include a provision for the Legislature to directly select electors or to award electors to anyone other than the person who received the most votes," Shirkey's spokeswoman said last week.

During a press conference in Wilmington, Delaware, on Thursday, Biden said Americans are "witnessing incredible irresponsibility, incredibly damaging messages are being sent to the rest of the world about how democracy functions."

He added, "I just think it's totally irresponsible."

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, one of Trump's most vocal GOP critics, accused Trump of resorting to "overt pressure on state and local officials to subvert the will of the people and overturn the election." Romney added, "It is difficult to imagine a worse, more undemocratic action by a sitting American President."

A few hours earlier, Trump personal attorney Rudy Giuliani and others had held a press conference to allege a widespread Democratic election conspiracy involving multiple states and suspect voting machines. But election officials across the country have said repeatedly there was no widespread fraud.

Many of the allegations of fraud stem from poll watchers who filed affidavits included with lawsuits in battleground states aimed at delaying vote certification. Those affidavits lean into innuendo and unsupported suggestions of fraud.

For example, they refer to suitcases in a polling place, but make no suggestion that ballots were being secretly counted. There are allegations of ballots being duplicated — something routinely done when a ballot is physically damaged. There are claims that partisan poll watchers were too far away to observe well and therefore something fishy was probably going on. But they don't have proof. Poll watchers have no auditing role in elections; they are volunteer observers.

Giuliani cited a few sworn affidavits that he said showed a vast Democratic conspiracy, but added that he could not reveal much of the evidence. One he cited was from Jessy Jacob, identified as a city employee in Detroit who said she saw other workers coaching voters to cast ballots for Biden and the Democrats.

A judge who refused to block certification of Detroit-area results noted that Jacob's claims included no "date, location, frequency or names of employees" and that she only came forward after unofficial results indicated Biden had won Michigan.

Trump legal adviser Jenna Ellis, who joined Giuliani, said more evidence would be forthcoming and that Trump's allies would have more success in courts going forward. But so far, most of their legal actions have been dismissed.

Chris Krebs, the Trump administration election official fired last week over the comments about the security of 2020, tweeted: "That press conference was the most dangerous 1hr 45 minutes of television in American history. And possibly the craziest."

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., tweeted: "Rudy and his buddies should not pressure electors to ignore their certification obligations under the statute. We are a nation of laws, not tweets."

In Pennsylvania, where the Trump campaign is challenging the election results in federal court, a legal team led by Giuliani suggested in a filing Wednesday that the judge order the Republican-led state legislature to pick delegates to the Electoral College, potentially

throwing the state's 20 electoral votes to Trump. A judge canceled an evidentiary hearing in the case.

In Arizona, the Republican Party is pressuring county officials to delay certifying results. The GOP lost a bid on Thursday to postpone certification in Maricopa County, the state's most populous. In northwestern Arizona, Mohave County officials postponed their certification until next week.

Judge John Hannah ruled without explanation, except to bar the party from refiling the case. The judge promised a full explanation in the future.

Maricopa County officials are expected to certify elections results on Friday.

Biden won Arizona by more than 10,000 votes, and Maricopa County put him over the top. The county performed a hand count of some ballots the weekend after the election, which showed its machine counts were 100% accurate. The same was found Wednesday during routine post-election accuracy tests.

In Georgia, where officials have been auditing the results of the presidential race, Trump has repeatedly attacked the process and called it "a joke."

He has also made repeated incorrect assertions that Georgia election officials are unable to verify signatures on absentee ballot envelopes. In fact, Georgia requires that they be checked.

The Associated Press called Biden the winner of Georgia and its 16 electoral votes on Thursday night.

A top Georgia election official said earlier Thursday that a hand tally of ballots cast in the presidential race had been completed, and that the results affirmed Biden's narrow lead over Trump. The secretary of state's office planned to release results of the audit later Thursday.

During the hand tally, several counties found previously uncounted ballots that the secretary of state's office has said would reduce Biden's lead to just under 13,000 votes, with roughly 5 million total votes cast. Georgia law allows a candidate to request a recount within two business days of certification if the margin is less than 0.5 percentage points. That recount would be done using machines.

Eggert reported from Lansing. Associated Press writers Alanna Durkin Richer in Boston, Kate Brumback and Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta, Alexandra Jaffe in Wilmington and Jacques Billeaud in Phoenix contributed to this report.

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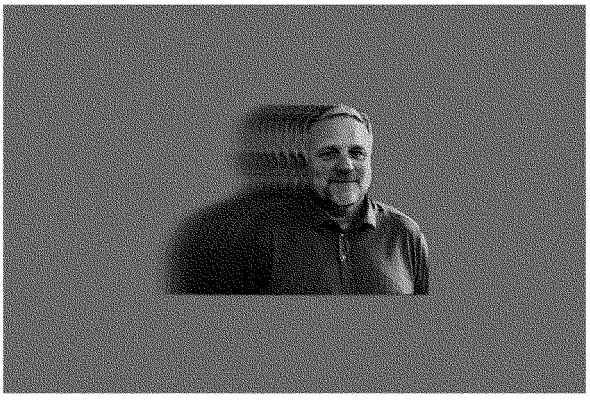


Andrea Wise/ProPublica; source image: courtesy of Greeson Family

THE INSURRECTION

The Radicalization of Kevin Greeson

How one man went from attending President Barack Obama's inauguration to dying in the mob protesting Donald Trump's election loss during the Capitol insurrection.

by Connor Sheets, AL.com, Jan. 15, 7 a.m. EST

ProPublica is a nonprofit newsroom that investigates abuses of power. Sign up to receive our biggest stories as soon as they're published.

This article was produced in partnership with AL.com, which was a member of the ProPublica Local Reporting Network in 2019.

In 2009, Kevin Greeson traveled from Alabama to witness the inauguration of President Barack Obama, at the time one of his political heroes. Twelve years later, a stone's throw from where Obama had been sworn in, Greeson died of a heart attack while demonstrating in support of President Donald Trump during the Jan. 6 siege of the Capitol.

Greeson had undergone a stark political transformation in those intervening years. A longtime Democrat who once championed unions and supported progressive politicians, Greeson had become a staunch Trump supporter by the time he died outside the Capitol at the age of 55.

In the weeks leading up to his death, he gave up Fox News for less mainstream right-wing news sources and wrote a series of posts on the

conservative-leaning social media site Parler advocating political violence in response to what he saw as Democrats' efforts to "steal" the 2020 election from the president.

"Let's take this fucking Country BACK!! Load your guns and take to the streets!" he wrote on Dec. 17.

While Greeson's inflammatory Parler posts and false online rumors that he tased himself to death have drawn considerable attention, his political transformation has not.

"He was a vice president at the union, and he was an Obama supporter," said Mark McDaniel, the Huntsville attorney representing the Greeson family. "He got interested in Trump because he felt he was more business-minded, and as the economy kept getting better, he kept getting more interested in Trump."

For much of the late 20th century, north Alabama was home to a number of large factories and industrial facilities that provided blue-collar jobs with decent wages to people like Greeson. But many of those positions were eliminated over the past two decades as manufacturers and plants closed or sold to foreign companies — and as the jobs disappeared, the Democratic Party's support dwindled.

"I think things are getting more polarized," said Doug Norman, a 73-year-old retired Decatur man who ran a waste oil recycling company for many years. "Over the last 10 years, there was a shift."

Over a plate of eggs Benedict at Whisk'd Cafe, a lunch spot in Decatur near the former Goodyear plant where Greeson worked for over two decades, Norman said that, like many other longtime residents, he has become more committed to Republican politics over the past 10 years. He, too, said he believes the 2020 election was "stolen" from the president.

"I think a lot of people saw where the stock market, unemployment and economy were going, and they started moving toward Trump," he said. "A lot of my friends weren't even into politics, but Trump kind of activated something."

Greeson wasn't the only Trump supporter from north Alabama with high-profile ties to the Jan. 6 insurrection. Lonnie Coffman, a 70-year-old from Falkville, a rural community about 30 miles from where Greeson lived, was arrested near the Capitol the night of the riots. He was indicted on 17 federal weapons charges after police allegedly found materials to produce Molotov cocktails and five illegal firearms — including an AR-15 — in his pickup truck.

A.J. Kramer, the federal public defender for the District of Columbia, said Thursday that his office is representing Coffman but that it had not yet

made any filings in his case.

Nancy Stephenson, who worked with Greeson at the Goodyear plant, left Alabama in 2007 for Memphis, Tennessee, and then for Houston. She returned in 2016 to find a changed — and charged — political landscape. According to Stephenson, the steady elimination of good jobs had combined with concerns about immigration and the Affordable Care Act to drive many people she knew in the area to take a hard right turn.

"When I left, they were into golf clubs and fishing poles," she said. "When I got back, it was automatic weapons."

"It's All Republicans Now"

For 21 years, Greeson worked at the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company plant in Decatur where his father worked before him. He started out on the factory floor and eventually took on a leadership role with Local 88T of the United Food & Commercial Workers union.

Greeson stopped working at the plant in 2006, according to his LinkedIn profile — the same year a South Korean firm, Hyosung Corp., purchased the red-brick complex.

In the early 2000s, many people who worked in manufacturing in north Alabama supported Southern Democrats, and Obama enjoyed support on assembly lines and in union halls. The region was mostly red, but not intensely so, and there were pockets of blue.

Morgan County, home to the former Goodyear plant, and neighboring Limestone County, where Greeson lived, both favored George W. Bush in 2000 with around 60% of the vote. But over the years, north Alabama grew more Republican. By 2016, Trump received more than 70% of the vote in both counties. And there were no longer blue counties nearby.

Bryan Duncan, a corrections officer at Limestone Correctional Facility and an Athens resident, said he's felt the political winds shift since he first moved to north Alabama over two decades ago.

"It's all Republicans now," the 45-year-old said as he headed into Walmart in Athens on Tuesday afternoon. "I think people became more interested in the Republican Party especially due to social media and the easy access to everybody's opinions. It's easier to find more people on your side."

Valeria Vizcarra, an Athens waitress, said that though she is only 20, she is old enough to have seen how politics have affected her community. "When Trump came into office, they became more outspoken for sure," she said Tuesday. "They like that he was a businessman."

She, like Stephenson, said that locals see in Trump a leader who's looking out for the middle class.

"I believe the Obama policies caused a lot of soreness in this area," Stephenson said. "And I honestly think people thought Trump was going to make them wealthy."

Jess Brown, professor emeritus of government and public affairs at Athens State University, said many people share a "frustration" with the way the economy has declined in north Alabama.

"People who lack specialized skills and probably an education beyond a high school diploma in today's market are not experiencing social mobility," he said. "That simply was not the case for generations of people following the industrialization of America."

"Intellectual Rathole"

For most of his adult life, Greeson got the majority of his news from mainstream sources like CNN and AL.com, according to his wife, Kristi, who answered questions through the family attorney, McDaniel.

But over the past few years, Greeson gravitated toward Fox News and other conservative outlets as he became enamored with Trump and the good he believed the president was doing for the economy and for American industry.

In the days after Trump lost his reelection bid in November, Greeson posted on Parler that he, like many diehard Trump fans, no longer trusted Fox News, and that the cable channel had "jumped ship." Instead, he declared that he would only consume news produced by the pro-Trump, far-right outlet Newsmax, and that he would use Parler instead of Facebook.

"I'm done with Facebook and Fox News!" he wrote in a November Parler post, called a Parley.

"We can't get anything true from the news media," he wrote in another November Parley. "NewsMax is the only channel I'm trusting at this point."

Greeson's wife, who declined to respond to questions about her own politics or how her husband's political transformation impacted their family, told McDaniel she saw the shift in her husband's media habits.

Greeson became convinced that Trump had won the November election, a false narrative ceaselessly pushed by both the president and many far-right outlets.

Brown said it didn't surprise him to learn that Greeson's views intensified as he consumed increasingly fringe media.

"The new media landscape of America encourages extreme political behavior," Brown said. "Do I think there's a component or subset of the electorate in north Alabama that's gone down that intellectual rathole? I certainly do, but I think they've gone down that same rathole in Colorado and in Montana and other places."

In the weeks after the election, Greeson posted a series of violent messages on Parler, calling for people to take up arms against a political system he considered corrupt. He shared support for the white supremacist Proud Boys movement, called for Obama to "be put to death" and expressed his apparent hope that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi would die of COVID-19.

On Nov. 29, Greeson called for members of Congress to support Trump's attempts to overturn the election: "Stand the fuck up! Our President is being took (sic) out of office in [a] coup and you motherfuckers do nothing!! It might take a few years but Trump and the American people will take you fucks out of your office."

A Final Trip

On Jan. 5, Greeson drove from Alabama to Washington, where he did some sightseeing that evening and spent the night at a friend's house in Virginia. The next day, he joined the crowd of protesters who had gathered on the National Mall to express support for Trump and demand that Congress "stop the steal" and overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

McDaniel said that despite Greeson's menacing online rhetoric, his wife does not believe he had any intention of committing violence on Jan. 6. And unlike Coffman and some other attendees of the events that day, police have not alleged that Greeson had illegal weapons or committed a crime in Washington.

"I think that he looked at social media as something where he was just talking to friends. Nothing in this man's life would lead anyone to believe that he was headed up there to do anything bad or anything sinister," McDaniel said. "According to [Kristi Greeson], he was just a really big Trump supporter, and he wanted to go up there and show his support and live the experience."

Little information about exactly what happened in the minutes and hours preceding Greeson's death is available. In a written statement sent to members of the media after his death, his wife noted that he "had a history of high blood pressure, and in the midst of the excitement, suffered a heart attack."

McDaniel said Greeson was on the phone with his wife when he went into cardiac arrest.

"He was talking to her on the phone and he quit talking," McDaniel said. "She was upset because she thought he had hung up on her."

McDaniel said that in the days following Greeson's death, his wife spoke on the phone with a reporter who saw her husband in the moments before his death and a person who attempted to resuscitate him, and that they both told her Greeson was outdoors on the Capitol grounds at the time.

The Metropolitan Police Department incident report states that he "was in the area of the United States Capitol in attendance of first ammendment (sic) activities" when he had a heart attack.

According to the incident report, Greeson was declared dead at 2:05 p.m. on Jan. 6. Minutes later, the first rioters broke into the Capitol.

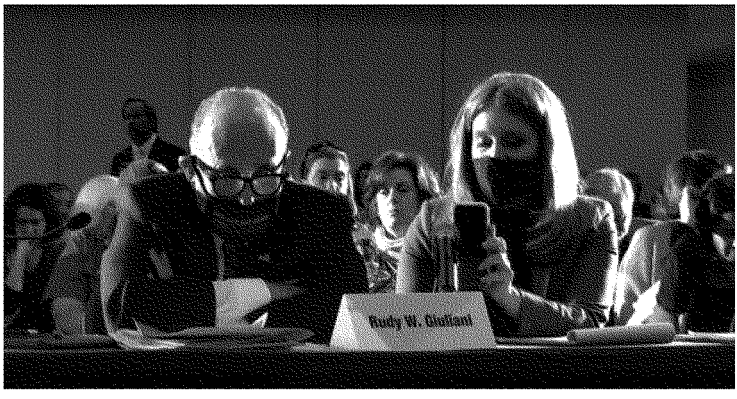
President Trump: Wayne County canvassers 'harassed violently'

detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2020/11/25/president-trump-wayne-county-canvassers-harassed-violently/6425748002/

Craig Mauger, The Detroit News Published 4:05 p.m. ET Nov. 25, 2020 | Updated 4:10 p.m. ET Nov. 25, 2020

President Donald Trump continued to make inaccurate statements Wednesday about the election process in Michigan's largest county and said the Republican canvassers who agreed to certify Wayne County's results had been "harassed violently."

The president, who lost Michigan by 154,000 votes on Nov. 3, made the comments while calling into a hearing in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, held by GOP state lawmakers there.



President Donald Trump calls into a hearing on the Nov. 3 election in Pennsylvania on Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2020. (Photo: Screenshot)

Trump referenced the two Republican members of the Wayne County Board of Canvassers, who initially blocked certifying the county's results on Nov. 17 before voting to validate them. Canvassers Monica Palmer and William Hartmann were "afraid," the president said without mentioning them by name.

"They're harassed violently, and they turned off the cameras during the harassment for two hours," Trump said. "Then, they said, 'Wow,' and they were afraid and they voted."

There were brief problems with the video feed for the Wayne County Board of Canvassers meeting but the feed didn't go down for two hours, as Trump stated.

In a signed affidavit released after the meeting, Palmer voiced concerns about the number of out-of-balance precincts in Detroit. For about 70% of the city's county boards for absentee ballots, the number of voters tracked in poll books didn't match the number of votes tallied — a fact that isn't direct evidence of fraud.

Palmer said she was later told by legal counsel that she couldn't use her "discretion regarding the anomalies" and agreed to certify the results on the promise of a "full, independent audit."

"I believed I had no choice but to certify the results despite my desire to oppose certification based on the incomplete record," she said.

Palmer told the Board of State Canvassers on Monday that she received threats against her family including receiving graphic images of naked, dead women and a photo of her daughter "letting me know that that's what's going to happen to my daughter." Palmer said she was also called a terrorist and told that "my entire family should be fearful for their lives."

On Tuesday, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel said her office was "actively investigating threats" made against members of the Wayne County Board of Canvassers.

The Board of State Canvassers voted 3-0 to certify Michigan's results on Monday, cementing Biden's victory in the state. A fourth member of the board, Norm Shinkle, a Republican, abstained.

Rudy Giuliani, Trump's attorney, has said previously the campaign identified 300,000 "illegitimate ballots" in Michigan but hasn't provided evidence to back up the claim.

The president told Pennsylvania lawmakers on Wednesday there were "more votes than you have voters" in Detroit. He was likely referencing the out-of-balance precincts in the city because only half of the city's registered voters participated in the Nov. 3 election.

Wayne County election officials have said precincts in Detroit were out of balance by a few hundred votes out of 250,000. Data from the county shows the city's precincts were off by at least 441 votes.

That doesn't mean necessarily that there were more ballots cast than voters tracked because it's possible in some instances that ballots were allocated to the incorrect precincts and that there were fewer votes tallied than voters.

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The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Pro-Trump forums erupt with violent threats ahead of Wednesday's rally against the 2020 election

Posters respond to Trump's prediction of 'wild' day with discussion of potential bloodshed and advice on sneaking guns into D.C.

By **Craig Timberg** and **Drew Harwell**

Jan. 5, 2021 at 12:57 p.m. EST

Far-right online forums are seething with references to potential violence and urging supporters of President Trump to bring guns to Wednesday's protests in Washington — in violation of local laws — as Congress meets to certify President-elect Joe Biden's victory.

Many of the posts appear to be direct responses to Trump's demands that his supporters pack the nation's capital in support of his bogus claims that November's national vote for Biden resulted from election fraud. Congress's largely ceremonial role in confirming Biden's victory has emerged as a catalyst for expected unrest that has D.C. police and the National Guard deploying on city streets to quell potential trouble.

Talk of guns and potential violence is rife on the encrypted messaging app Telegram, the conservative social media site Parler and on thedonald.win, an online forum that previously operated on Reddit before the company banned it in June after years of racism, misogyny, anti-Semitism and calls for violence.

Trump's tweet last month pushing baseless fraud claims and promoting the "big protest" on Jan. 6 — "Be there, will be wild!" — has become a central rallying cry. It was the top post on thedonald.win Tuesday morning, and anonymous commenters saw it as a call to action: "We've got marching orders," the top reply said.

Discussion in the thread followed about how most effectively to sneak guns into Washington, laced with occasional references to using them. D.C. has some of the nation's strictest gun laws: Openly carrying guns is banned, concealed-carry licenses from other states aren't recognized, and all firearms in the District must be registered with local police.

Of carrying guns in D.C., one poster in the thread wrote, "Yes, it's illegal, but this is war and we're clearly in a post-legal phase of our society." Wrote another: "LIVE AS A FREE AMERICAN AND BRING YOUR ARMS!"

More than half of the top 50 posts on thedonald.win's homepage Monday related to Wednesday's certification featured calls of violence within the top five comments, according to research by Advance Democracy, a group headed by former FBI analyst and Senate investigator Daniel J. Jones, who led the review of the CIA's torture program.

The group said thedonald.win had more than 18 million visits in November, and the recent posts with calls for violence had more than 40,000 engagements. One particularly troubling post said protesters should travel in groups that should "not let [anyone] disarm someone without stacking bodies." It added that protesters should be "ARMED WITH RIFLE, HANDGUN, 2 KNIVES AND AS MUCH AMMO AS YOU CAN CARRY."

In one thread promoted by moderators Tuesday morning, titled "GOOD LUCK PATRIOTS, THE EYES OF THE WORLD LOOK UPON YOU NOW!!!," posters shared tactical guides on how to avoid police blockades and D.C. gun laws, including: "If you plan on carrying concealed, don't tell anyone you have a gun." One commenter responded, "We The People, will not tolerate a Steal. No retreat, No Surrender. Restore to my President what you stole or reap the consequences!!!"

Moderators for thedonald.win did not respond to requests for comment.

Researchers expressed concern that the roiling political atmosphere is being fueled by Trump's unfounded claims about the integrity of the election that have swirled on far-right online forums for two months.

"You have what disinformation researchers have worried about for years, which is people becoming motivated to action by lies," said Joan Donovan, the research director at Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy.

References to guns and potential violence also have become routine on Telegram and Parler, according to the Coalition for a Safer Web, a nonprofit group that advocates for technologies and policies to remove extreme content from social media. It cited a Parler post from last week, by an account touting the QAnon conspiracy theory, that said, "To all the Patriots descending on Washington DC on #jan6 ....come armed...."

A number of posts on Parler and thedonald.win voiced anti-police messages and slammed "Coptifa" — a combination of "cop" and "antifa," the far-left protest movement. "WE THE PEOPLE ... are through with you," said one expletive-filled post on Parler. "To all our enemies high and low you want a war? Well your asking for one. ... To the American people on the ground in DC today and all over this great nation, be prepared for anything. ... Now we are here. Now they get what they want."

Parler's chief operating officer, Jeffrey Wernick, declined to comment.

The arrest of Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio on Monday, for charges related to the burning of a historically Black church's Black Lives Matter flag in a protest last month, has further inflamed far-right conversations online, said Eric Feinberg, vice president for content moderation for the Coalition for a Safer Web.

"You don't know who's going to get radicalized by this," Feinberg said. "The next three days, I'm really worried about what could happen."

Capitol siege was planned online. Trump supporters now planning the next one.

washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/01/09/trump-twitter-protests/

By Craig Timberg, Drew Harwell and Marissa J. Lang January 9, 2021



The planning for Wednesday's assault on the U.S. Capitol happened largely in plain view, with chatters in far-right forums explicitly discussing how to storm the building, handcuff lawmakers with zip ties and disrupt the certification of Joe Biden's election — in what they portrayed as responding to orders from President Trump.

This went far beyond the widely reported, angry talk about thronging Washington that day. Trump supporters exchanged detailed tactical advice about what to bring and what to do once they assembled at the Capitol to conduct "citizen's arrests" of members of Congress. One poster said, "[expletive] zip ties. I'm bringing rope!"

Such comments were not confined to dark corners of the Web. They were scooped up and catalogued by researchers who made their findings public weeks before a seemingly unprepared Capitol Police force was overrun by thousands of rioters, in an incident that left one officer, one rioter and three other people dead.

The question left unanswered is why authorities didn't prepare more effectively for a storm that many outsiders saw looming on the horizon — especially when those planning the assault were so open about their intentions.

"Given the very clear and explicit warning signs — with Trump supporters expressing prior intent to 'storm and occupy Congress' and use 'handcuffs and zip ties,' clear plans being laid out on public forums, and the recent precedent of the plot to storm the Michigan Capitol building while the legislature was in session — it is truly mind-boggling that the police were not better prepared," said Rita Katz, executive director of SITE Intelligence Group, which was among the research groups that detailed what was coming in the weeks before the Capitol was attacked. It recapped much of this evidence in a report published Saturday.

Capitol Police spokeswoman Eva Malecki did not respond to requests for comment on Saturday.

The desire to prevent a repeat of Wednesday's attack helped drive Twitter's decision to suspend Trump's account after years in which he challenged the company's policies against hate speech and inciting violence. The two tweets the company cited in its announcement Friday night were tamer than many during his candidacy or his presidency, but Twitter said it was particularly concerned about contributing to a possible "secondary attack" on the U.S. Capitol and state government facilities the weekend of Jan. 16-17.

Concerns about more violent incidents appear to be well-founded. Calls for widespread protests on the days leading up to the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden have been rampant online for weeks. These demonstrations are scheduled to culminate with what organizers have dubbed a "Million Militia March" on Jan. 20 as Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala D. Harris are to be sworn in on the same Capitol grounds that rioters overran on Wednesday.

"We all knew that tens of thousands of extremists would converge on D.C. Wednesday, so there's no excuse for the resourcing failure," said Brian Harrell, a former Trump administration Department of Homeland Security assistant secretary for infrastructure protection, who is now chief security officer for Avangrid, an energy company. "Law enforcement was ill-prepared for an event the entire country knew was coming, and one that [the president] has been signaling for weeks. ... It's shocking."

The renewed calls to action in recent days have bristled with violent talk and vows to bring guns to Washington in defiance of the city's strict weapons laws. A new analysis of such posts by Alethea Group, an organization combating disinformation that draws its name from the Greek word for "truth," found abundant evidence of threatening plans on a range of platforms large and small.

The aggressive and often hateful chatter has appeared on both mainstream sites such as Twitter and Facebook and niche conservative sites such as TheDonald.win and Parler. The specified locations include the U.S. Capitol and the Mall in Washington, the Utah Capitol in Salt Lake City, and locations in Pittsburgh and Columbus, Ohio. Some events, including an "Armed March on All State Capitals," include localized events in all 50 states.

"REFUSE TO BE SILENCED," said one online post cited by Alethea Group, calling for an "ARMED MARCH ON CAPITOL HILL & ALL STATE CAPITOLS" for Jan. 17, the last Sunday of Trump's polarizing presidency. Another post called for action at "DC & All State Capitols" and was signed by "common folk who are tired of being tread upon" declares: "We were warned!"

Parler's chief operating officer, Jeffrey Wernick, declined to comment. An unnamed moderator for TheDonald wrote an accusatory direct message in response to a request for commentthat used an obscenity to describe Washington Post reporters but did not respond to the substance of the query.

The bitterness and specificity of the posts cited by the Alethea Group resembles what was publicly reported ahead of Wednesday's assault. In addition to SITE, the Coalition for a Safer Web sent numerous dispatches warning of the trouble brewing, as did Advance Democracy. Online chatter was organized, in some cases, around hashtags such as #StormTheCapitol and included threats to kill congressional leaders.

Numerous researchers cited a Trump tweet urging supporters to come to Washington on Wednesday, the day of the presidential vote certification in Congress, that said, "Be there, will be wild!"

One poster responded on a pro-Trump forum: "He can't exactly openly tell you to revolt. ... This is the closest he'll ever get." Another poster, according to the SITE report, called for storming the building to "encircle" Congress and "go after the traitors directly." Another said, "Bring handcuffs and zip ties to DC" — things that later showed up in numerous images of the riot.

"It's not so much that the cops weren't aware of it. It's almost like they were willfully ignorant of the possibility of violence," said Marc Ginsberg, president of the Coalition for a Safer Web, who personally shared his findings with government officials. "I felt like crawling into a hole after I saw what happened."

Warnings even came from private citizens, including activists normally wary of the police. One activist, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of backlash from the far-right groups, said she spent her Christmas neck-deep in far-right death threats, wading through online forums that detailed plans to smuggle guns into the District, kidnap Democratic lawmakers and violently attack D.C. police and racial justice activists.

What she read disturbed her so deeply that she decided to violate one of the cardinal rules of the D.C. activist groups she has protested among since the summer: Call the police. She called the FBI's tip line on Monday, Dec. 28, and told the woman on the other end of the phone about detailed threats and plans she had seen shared on forums including Parler, Telegram and threads on the website TheDonald. All proved to be major staging grounds for Wednesday's attack.

"It was a very difficult decision for me to call the FBI, but who else can you tell? They're explicitly discussing committing federal crimes — attacking the Capitol, attacking the police, attacking us," said the activist. "I told them, 'Look, they're planning to kill members of Congress and they're openly discussing bringing guns over state lines.' I thought if that didn't get their attention nothing would."

The FBI did not respond to a request for comment Saturday.

Federal, state and local law enforcement have been aggressively building their intelligence capabilities since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks caught the nation off guard. Subsequent investigation pointed to failures to share pieces of information gathered by various agencies, prompting the creation of fusion centers and other means for transmitting intelligence in the future.

The spread of social media in recent years — and its widespread use as an organizing tool for activists — has made tracking threats that build online easier.

"There's a big distance between having information and having a threat assessment," said Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, a think tank. "The question is what they did with the intelligence they had. Did they make a proper threat assessment? If not, why not?"

Similar information is flowing freely to authorities now, as the same online forums light up with the same kind of violent chatter.

Some event listings for the days ahead of the inauguration are openly discussing delivering "justice" for Ashli Babbitt, a rioter and Air Force veteran who was fatally shot by police inside the Capitol on Wednesday.

Cindy Otis, vice president of analysis at Alethea, said: "So much of the conversation right now is the general making of threats. There's a risk of these particular dates leading to violence because that's the kind of amped-up conversation we're already seeing from people."

The Washington Post

EXCLUSIVE

41 minutes of fear: A video timeline from inside the Capitol siege

Watch the timeline 14:27

Using facial recognition, exclusive, unpublished video and interviews with lawmakers, The Post reconstructed the chaos inside the seat of government.

By **Dalton Bennett, Emma Brown, Sarah Cahlan, Joyce Sohyun Lee, Meg Kelly, Elyse Samuels, Jon Swaine**

JANUARY 16, 2021



At 2:12 p.m. on Jan. 6, supporters of President Trump began climbing through a window they had smashed on the northwest side of the U.S. Capitol. "Go! Go! Go!" someone shouted as the rioters, some in military gear, streamed in.

It was the start of the most serious attack on the Capitol since the War of 1812. The mob coursed through the building, enraged that Congress was preparing to make Trump's electoral defeat official. "Drag them out! ... Hang them out!" rioters yelled at one point, as they gathered near the House chamber.

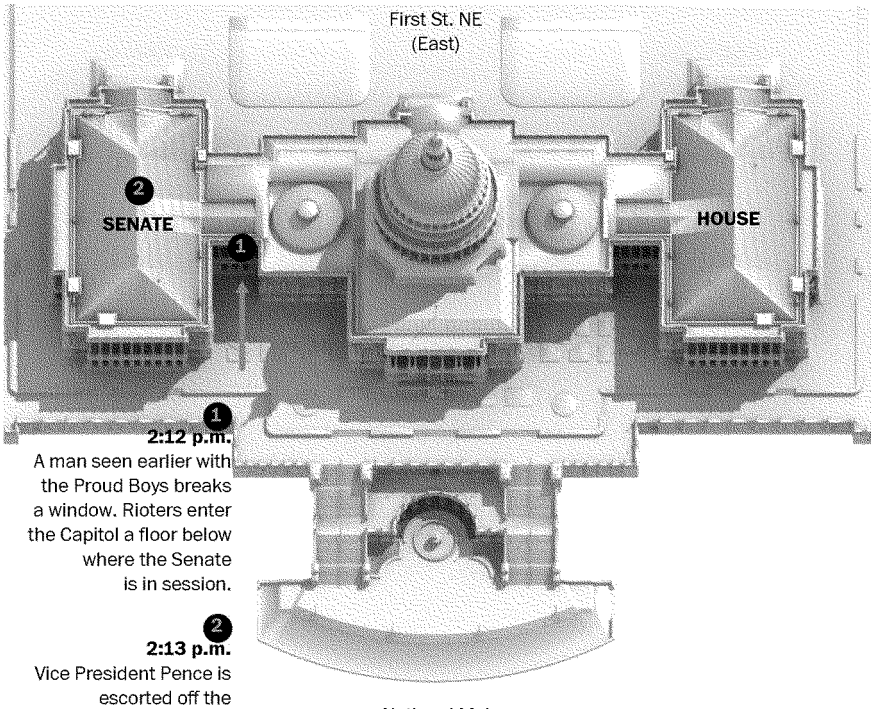
Officials in the House and Senate secured the doors of their respective chambers, but lawmakers were soon forced to retreat to undisclosed locations. Five people died, including a Capitol police officer. In all, more than 50 officers were injured.

To reconstruct the pandemonium inside the Capitol for the video above, The Washington Post examined text messages, photos and hundreds of videos, some of which were exclusively obtained. By synchronizing the footage and locating some of the camera angles within a digital 3-D model of the building, The Post was able to map the rioters' movements and assess how close they came to lawmakers — in some cases feet apart or separated only by a handful of vastly outnumbered police officers.

The Post used a facial-recognition algorithm that differentiates individual faces — it does not identify people — to estimate that at least 300 rioters were present in footage taken inside the Capitol while police were struggling to evacuate lawmakers. The actual number of rioters is probably greater, since the footage analyzed by The Post did not capture everyone in the building.

After breaking in on the Senate side of the Capitol, rioters began moving from the ground floor up one level to the chamber itself. Vice President

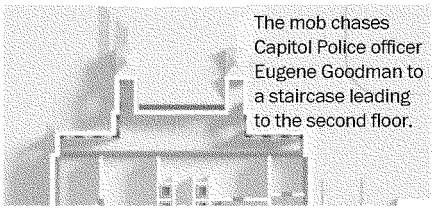
Pence, who had been presiding, was moved to a nearby office at 2:13 p.m. The mob passed by about one minute later.



1 2:12 p.m. A man seen earlier with the Proud Boys breaks a window. Rioters enter the Capitol a floor below where the Senate is in session.

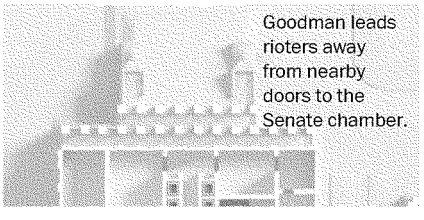
2 2:13 p.m. Vice President Pence is escorted off the Senate floor. Sen. Charles E. Grassley begins presiding, but almost immediately calls a recess.

GROUND FLOOR

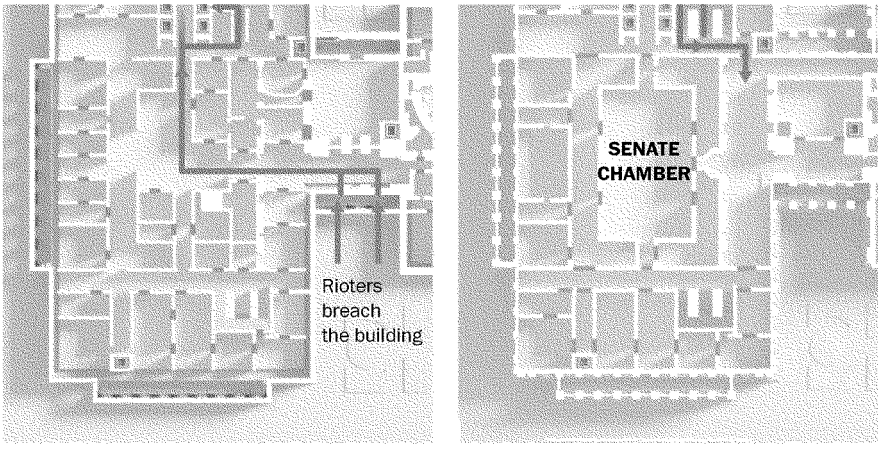


The mob chases Capitol Police officer Eugene Goodman to a staircase leading to the second floor.

SECOND FLOOR



Goodman leads rioters away from nearby doors to the Senate chamber.



[Election results under attack: Here are the facts]

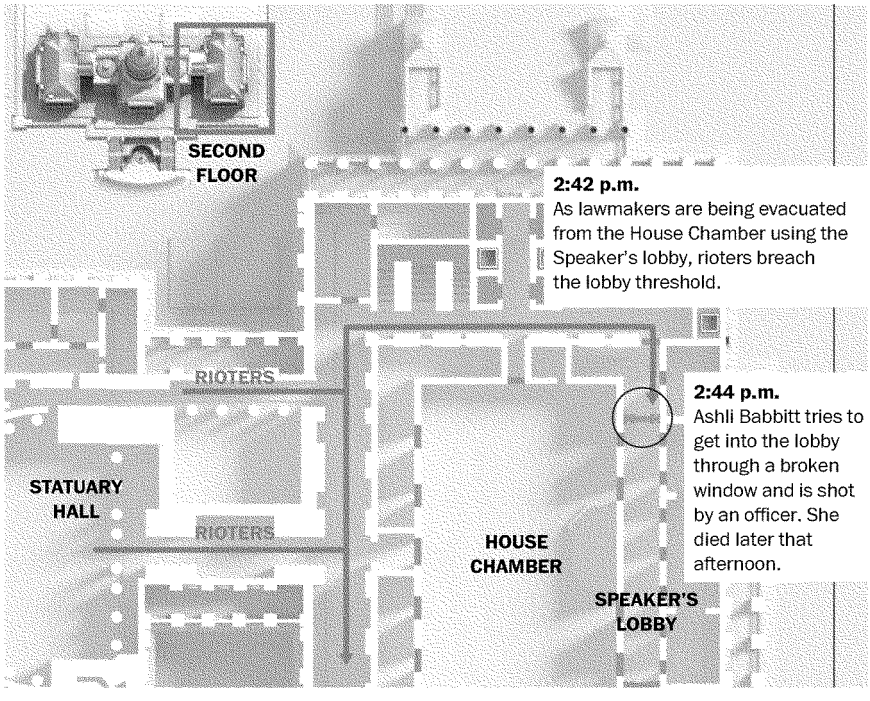
On the other side of the building, the House briefly recessed and then resumed business in its chamber on the second floor, even as rioters stormed into Speaker Nancy Pelosi's suite of offices, The Post found. "They're pounding the doors trying to find her," one Pelosi staffer said to another, a comment captured on an audio recording at 2:28 p.m.

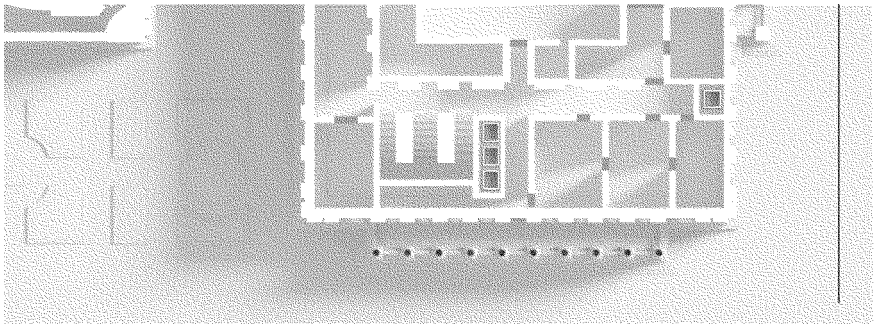
At approximately 2:40 p.m., a group of lawmakers left the House floor via the Speaker's Lobby, an adjacent corridor featuring portraits of past leaders of the House. The lawmakers came within sight of an angry mob.

The two groups were separated by several police officers and a barricaded glass-paneled door that the rioters were attempting to smash.

"Break it down! Break it down!" rioters chanted, as lawmakers filed out.

Two minutes after the last of the lawmakers had left the corridor, Trump supporter Ashli Babbitt was shot dead by a Capitol Police officer as she began to climb through a broken section of the door.





['Trump said to do so': Accounts of rioters who say the president spurred them to rush the Capitol could be pivotal testimony]

In the gallery overlooking the chamber, some lawmakers had yet to be evacuated when Babbitt was shot. "I heard the gunshot, a lot of screaming," recalled Rep. Robin Kelly (D-Ill.), who was in the gallery.

By 2:53 p.m., 41 minutes after rioters entered the building through the smashed window, the last member of the last large group of House members to leave had been evacuated and was headed for a secure location.

Watch the video

Graphics by Aaron Steckelberg, Sarah Hashemi, Osman Malik, Brian

Monroe, William Neff, Lauren Tierney and Laris Karklis. Photo research by Nick Kirkpatrick.

Additional reporting was contributed by Aaron C. Davis, Mike DeBonis, Karoun Demirjian, Paul Kane, Seung Min Kim and Bill O'Leary.

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Track the Covid economy
See how drastically everyday life in America has changed since the start of the pandemic.

Twitter permanently suspends Steve Bannon account after talk of beheading

By Curt Devine, Donie O'Sullivan and Kara Scannell, CNN

Updated 4:38 PM ET, Fri November 6, 2020

(CNN Business) -- Twitter permanently suspended an account belonging to former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon after he suggested Thursday morning that Dr. Anthony Fauci and FBI Director Christopher Wray should be beheaded. His comments were made in a video posted to his Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter accounts.

Bannon falsely claimed President Trump had won reelection, despite several key states still being too close to call, and said that he should fire both Fauci and Wray.

He then said he would go further: "I'd put the heads on pikes. Right. I'd put them at the two corners of the White House as a warning to federal bureaucrats. You either get with the program or you are gone."

On Friday, a high-powered attorney representing Bannon in a criminal fraud case, moved to withdraw from representing him and asked that hearing scheduled for Monday in the case be postponed while Bannon looks for a new lawyer.

The lawyer, William Burck, a highly-regarded Republican attorney who served in the George W Bush administration, had represented Bannon during former Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russia's interference into the 2016 presidential election.

Bannon retained Burck after he and three others were indicted over the summer and charged with defrauding investors in a crowd-funding effort called "We Build The Wall" to raise money for a border wall. They have pleaded not guilty.

The inflammatory comments came during a livestream of Bannon's "War Room: Pandemic" online show.

The video was live on Bannon's Facebook page for about 10 hours Thursday and had been viewed almost 200,000 times before Facebook removed it, citing its violence and incitement policies. CNN has reached out to Bannon for comment.



shared by Eric Trump is fake

Earlier Thursday evening YouTube removed the video for violating its policy against "inciting violence." Twitter said it had permanently suspended the account of Bannon's "War Room" podcast for glorifying violence.

Bannon was also banned on Thursday from Mailchimp, an email newsletter platform that Bannon's podcast used to reach supporters.

The move could further limit Bannon's ability to promote his messages.

"We can confirm we've identified this account and closed it for violations of our Terms," Mailchimp tweeted after social media users noticed the business relationship.

Bannon's comments came as other supporters of President Trump also used violent and militaristic rhetoric to back Trump's baseless claims of a rigged election and to condemn his perceived political opponents.

In a tweet Thursday, Donald Trump Jr. called for his father "to go to total war over this election."

"It's time to clean up this mess & stop looking like a banana republic!" he added.

Trump Jr. also repeated multiple baseless claims undermining the integrity of the election in the tweet, which was labeled by Twitter as "disputed and might be misleading."

During the campaign, he had touted baseless rigged-election claims to recruit an "army" for his dad, as CNN has previously reported.

CNN has reached out to a spokesperson for Trump Jr. for comment.

Earlier on Thursday, Facebook shut down a pro-Trump group called "Stop The Steal," which amassed hundreds of thousands of members and had been coordinating protests that sought to challenge the election's legitimacy.

Some members of the group posted about civil war and revolting against the government should Trump lose the election, according to a report by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), a London-based think tank that monitors extremism.

"So IF they give this to Joe, how do we go about over throwing [sic] the government?" one member of the group asked in a post.

Ciaran O'Connor, an analyst with ISD, said that, although such posts may be hyperbolic, Facebook groups can be used to coordinate offline protests or events that could turn violent.

"It was possible for this group to become a hub for potentially violent behavior," O'Connor said.

One of the administrators of the "Stop the Steal" group, Dustin Stockton, told CNN he did not see any messages within the group "calling for violence outside of what is common political hyperbole." He said Facebook's removal of the page was "out of line and they should restore it immediately."

A Facebook spokesperson told CNN, "In line with the exceptional measures that we are taking during this period of heightened tension, we have removed the Group 'Stop the Steal,' which was creating real-world events."

map with false information went viral and landed in Trump's Twitter feed

worrying calls for violence from some members of the group."

Researchers say the controversy over the vote count is particularly fertile soil for extremists to spread their messages.

"A contested election creates the perfect conditions for extremists to create chaos, to sow division, and to try to undermine our democratic institutions," said Oren Segal, a vice president of the ADL's Center on Extremism. "All those are foundational goals for extremist movements across the board."

Even if comments from political influencers do not directly call for violence, war-like symbols and veiled references can valorize violence and potentially inspire people to action, said Cynthia Miller-Idriss, director of the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab at American University.

She said President Trump's comments at his first debate with Biden, in which he told the far-right group the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by," for instance, could have been perceived as a call to action, regardless of his intent.

CNN's Zachary Cohen, Mallory Simon and Brian Fung contributed to this article.

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The New York Times https://nyti.ms/3hQvDtn

'Be There. Will Be Wild!': Trump All but Circled the Date

Inside Trump supporters' online echo chambers, the chaos of Jan. 6 could be seen coming. People posted their plans to come to Washington — and showed the weapons they would carry.



By Dan Barry and Sheera Frenkel

Published Jan. 6, 2021 Updated Jan. 8, 2021

For weeks, President Trump and his supporters had been proclaiming Jan. 6, 2021, as a day of reckoning. A day to gather in Washington to "save America" and "stop the steal" of the election he had decisively lost, but which he still maintained — often through a toxic brew of conspiracy theories — that he had won by a landslide.

And when that day came, the president rallied thousands of his supporters with an incendiary speech. Then a large mob of those supporters, many waving Trump flags and wearing Trump regalia, violently stormed the Capitol to take over the halls of government and send elected officials into hiding, fearing for their safety.

But if the chaos in the Capitol shocked the country, one of the most disturbing aspects of this most disturbing day was that it could be seen coming. The president himself had all but circled it on the nation's calendar.

"Big protest in D.C. on January 6th," Mr. Trump tweeted on Dec. 19, just one of several of his tweets promoting the day. "Be there, will be wild!"

And his supporters took the president at his word.



A mob of Trump supporters breached the Capitol, and the building was placed on a lockdown. Roberto Schmidt/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Officers drew their weapons inside the House chamber. Drew Angerer/Getty Images

"If you are not prepared to use force to defend civilization, then be prepared to accept barbarism," a member of the Red-State Secession group on Facebook posted on Tuesday, the eve of the appointed day, Jan. 6.

Beneath it, dozens of people posted comments that included photographs of the weaponry — including assault rifles — that they said they planned to bring to the rally. There were also comments referring to "occupying" the Capitol and forcing Congress to overturn the November election that Joseph R. Biden Jr. had won — and Mr. Trump had lost.

Renée DiResta, a researcher who studies online movements at the Stanford Internet Observatory, said that the violent disruption at the Capitol on Wednesday was the result of online movements operating in closed social media networks where claims of voter fraud and a stolen election found oxygen.

"This is a demonstration of the very real-world impact of echo chambers," Ms. DiResta said.

The roots of one of the darkest moments in American democracy reached at least as far back as Nov. 4, the day after the presidential election that Mr. Trump would decisively lose to Mr. Biden. On that day, the first Stop the Steal group was formed on Facebook — and it quickly took off, realizing at one point 100 new members every 10 seconds. The group swelled to 320,000 followers before Facebook shut it down.

As hundreds of new Stop the Steal groups continued to pop up, Facebook became more aggressive in shutting them down, prompting some far-right supporters of Mr. Trump — including some involved in militias and conspiracy groups — to move to new, less-restrictive social media sites, including Parler and Gab. And it was on these sites that a movement to organize a pro-Trump protest rally in Washington gathered momentum.

Several right-wing activists, including Ali Alexander, a Republican operative who was previously known as Ali Akbar, began to emerge as leaders of Stop the Steal. Their conspiracy theories and fact-free claims of electoral fraud closely mirrored the same baseless charges being leveled by Mr. Trump.

Ali Alexander emerged as a leader of the Stop the Steal movement, advancing baseless claims of electoral fraud. Carlos Barria/Reuters

By mid-December, dozens of lawsuits filed by Trump supporters had failed, often miserably. Then, on Dec. 14, Mr. Biden secured enough votes in the Electoral College to affirm his victory. The last formality before his inauguration on Jan. 20 was the official count by Congress of electoral votes, a pro forma ceremony of paperwork, to be overseen by Vice President Mike Pence.

ON POLITICS WITH LISA LERER: *A guiding hand through the political news cycle, telling you what you really need to know.* Sign Up

On Jan. 6.

Mr. Alexander and others seized on the date, urging Trump supporters everywhere to converge onto the Capitol as Congress tended to what historically has been a glorified shuffling of papers — if sometimes infused with grace, as when Vice President Al Gore announced the names of the winner, George W. Bush, and the loser: Al Gore.

The moment has traditionally been seen as another reassurance of the transfer of power in the Republic. But Mr. Trump and his supporters were publicly framing this year's formality as criminal, fraudulent — even treasonous.

As his aides and supporters did what they could to forestall the inevitable — a lawsuit by the Texas congressman Louie Gohmert, a 36-page report alleging election fraud by the Trump adviser Peter Navarro — Mr. Trump continued tweeting.

Dec. 27: "See you in Washington, DC, on January 6th. Don't miss it. Information to follow."

Dec. 30: "JANUARY SIXTH, SEE YOU IN DC!"

Jan. 1: "The BIG Protest Rally in Washington, D.C. will take place at 11:00 A.M. on January 6th. Locational details to follow. StopTheSteal!"

That same day, a supporter misspelled the word "cavalry" in tweeting that "The calvary is coming, Mr. President!"

Mr. Trump responded: "A great honor!"

The next day, Jan. 2, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas and 11 other Republican senators joined another Republican, Josh Hawley of Missouri — as well as more than 100 Republican members of the House of Representatives — in vowing to object to the certification of Mr. Biden's election.

Senators Josh Hawley, left, and Ted Cruz had vowed to object to the Jan. 6 certification of Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s election. Andrew Harnik/Associated Press

By now, the extreme fringes of Trump supporters — including the Proud Boys and other groups known to incite violence, as well as conspiracy groups like QAnon — were exploring what they might do on Jan. 6 in Washington. On dedicated chats in Gab they discussed logistics of where to gather and what streets they would take to the Capitol. The Red-State Secession Facebook page even encouraged its

8,000 followers to share the addresses of "enemies," including those for federal judges, members of Congress and well-known progressives.

A sense of the percolating trouble came with a widely circulated video of a Trump supporter confronting Senator Mitt Romney, the Utah Republican and a frequent Trump critic, at Salt Lake International Airport as he awaited a flight Tuesday to Washington. When the supporter asked why he hadn't supported the president's claims of electoral fraud, Mr. Romney said that he would follow the Constitution.

"I wouldn't be surprised if you weren't even voted in legally," the person said as she followed the senator to the gate. "You're a joke, absolute joke, it's a disgusting shame."

Capitol Riot Fallout

From Riot to Impeachment

The riot inside the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, followed a rally at which President Trump made an inflammatory speech to his supporters, questioning the results of the election. Here's a look at what happened and the ongoing fallout:

- As this video shows, poor planning and a restive crowd encouraged by President Trump set the stage for the riot.
- A two hour period was crucial to turning the rally into the riot.
- Several Trump administration officials, including cabinet members Betsy DeVos and Elaine Chao, announced that they were stepping down as a result of the riot.
- Federal prosecutors have charged more than 70 people, including some who appeared in

SEE MORE

Meanwhile, members of the Red-State Secession Facebook page were conversing in the language of insurrection.

Then dawned Jan. 6, the day of reckoning. Thousands gathered in downtown Washington, forming rivers of Trump red that commingled the Trump and American flags. The crowd included between 2,000 and 2,500 members of the Proud Boys, according to Enrique Tarrio, the group's chairman.

Trump supporters at the president's rally on Wednesday. Pete Marovich for The New York Times

Any hope that Mr. Pence would block the congressional confirmation of Mr. Biden's election — thereby acquiescing to immense pressure being applied by Mr. Trump — was dashed before noon. Mr. Pence said in a letter that the vice president did not have such power.

"The presidency belongs to the American people, and to them alone," he wrote.

Then, at noon, Mr. Trump began to deliver a speech to his excited followers.

In the afternoon hours to come, Mr. Trump would excoriate his vice president for not having "the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution." In the hours to come, his supporters, carrying flags and wearing clothes that bore his name, would rush the Capitol in a terrifying swirl of chaos that would force a lockdown and leave one woman shot dead.

Among those who swarmed into the Capitol would be well-known QAnon characters and white supremacists. Jake Angeli, a QAnon supporter known for his painted face and horned hat, roamed the Senate floor. Tim Gionet, a neo-Nazi conspiracy theorist known as "Baked Alaska," would take over a Senate office.

Jake Angeli, a QAnon supporter known for his painted face and horned hat, roamed the Senate floor. Erin Schaff/The New York Times

But first came the remarks of the president, delivered on the Ellipse, just south of the White House.

"We will never give up," he said. "We will never concede. It will never happen. You don't concede when there's theft involved. Our country has had enough. We will not take it anymore."

Mr. Trump concluded his 70-minute exhortation by encouraging everyone to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue to give Republicans at the Capitol "the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country." Then the president of the United States returned to the White House, at a safe distance from the mayhem that was to unfold.

Alan Feuer contributed reporting. Kitty Bennett and Jack Begg contributed research.

Upton: 'I will vote to impeach'

patriotledger.com/story/news/politics/2021/01/13/upton-lsquoi-will-vote-to-impeachrsquo/43324853/

Dan Cherry @DCherrySJ1 | Sturgis Journal
The congressional representative for St. Joseph County on Tuesday issued a statement supporting the impeachment of President Donald Trump.

U.S. Rep. Fred Upton, R-St. Joseph, who represents Michigan's 6th District, issued the statement statement on impeachment, following an incident Jan. 6 in Washington, D.C., in which citizens broke past barriers and breached the U.S. Capitol and leaders debate the president's part and responsibility in the matter.

"Today, the President characterized his inflammatory rhetoric at last Wednesday's rally as 'totally appropriate,' and he expressed no regrets for last week's violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol," Upton said in a statement. "This sends exactly the wrong signal to those of us who support the very core of our democratic principles and took a solemn oath to the Constitution."

Upton said he would have preferred a bipartisan, formal censure, rather than a drawn-out impeachment process, but believes there is no choice.

"I fear this will now interfere with important legislative business and a new Biden administration," Upton said. "But it is time to say 'enough is enough.'"

Upton said Congress must hold President Trump acountable and "send a clear message that our country cannot and will not tolerate any effort by any president to impede the peaceful transfer of power from one president to the next. Thus, I will vote to impeach."

Upton is the 6th District representative in Congress, representing the city of Kalamazoo, as well as Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren counties, and a portion of Allegan County.

State Rep. Steve Carra, R-Three Rivers, who represents St. Joseph County at the state level through the 59th District, stated on social media Upton's stance is a "mistake."

POLITICO

2020 ELECTIONS

Thousands rally behind Trump, believing he won race he lost

Trump loyalists converged on the nation's capital to protest the election results and falsely assert the vote was stolen.



By ASSOCIATED PRESS
11/14/2020 01:19 PM EST
Updated: 11/14/2020 03:50 PM EST

Fervent supporters of President Donald Trump rallied in Washington on Saturday behind his spurious claim of a stolen election and swarmed his motorcade in adulation when he detoured for a drive-by on his way out of town.

Hours later, after night fell in the nation's capital, demonstrators favoring Trump clashed in the streets with counterprotesters, videos posted on social media showing fistfights, projectiles and clubs. By early evening, police had arrested at least 10, including four on firearms charges, and at least one stabbing was reported, The Washington Post reported.

AD

A week after Democrat Joe Biden was declared the winner of the election, demonstrations in support of Trump also took place in other cities. Fury at the prospect of a transfer of executive power showed no signs of abating, taking a cue the president's unrelenting assertion of victory in a race he actually lost.

"I just want to keep up his spirits and let him know we support him," one loyalist, Anthony Whittaker of Winchester, Virginia, said from outside the Supreme Court, where a few thousand assembled after a march along Pennsylvania Avenue from Freedom Plaza, near the White House.

A broad coalition of top government and industry officials has declared that the Nov. 3 voting and the following count unfolded smoothly with no more than the usual minor hiccups — "the most secure in American history," they said, repudiating Trump's efforts to undermine the integrity of the contest.

In Delray Beach, Florida, several hundred people marched, some carrying signs reading "Count every vote" and "We cannot live under a Marxist government." In Lansing, Michigan, protesters gathered at the Capitol to hear speakers cast doubt on results that showed Biden winning the state by more than 140,000

votes. Phoenix police estimated 1,500 people gathered outside the Arizona Capitol to protest Biden's narrow victory in the state.

The crowd in Washington was beginning to gather Saturday morning when cheers rang out as Trump's limousine neared Freedom Plaza. People lined both sides of the street, some standing just a few feet away from Trump's vehicle. Others showed their enthusiasm by running along with the caravan.

AD

They chanted "USA, USA" and "four more years," and many carried American flags and signs to show their displeasure with the vote tally. After making the short detour for the slow drive around the site, the motorcade headed to the president's Virginia golf club.

Among the speakers was a Georgia Republican newly elected to the U.S. House. Marjorie Taylor Greene, who has expressed racist views and support for QAnon conspiracy theories, urged people to march peacefully toward the Supreme Court.

The marchers included members of the Proud Boys, a neo-fascist group known for street brawling with ideological opponents at political rallies.

The march was largely peaceful during the day before turning tense at night, with multiple confrontations as small groups of Trump supporters attempted to enter the area around Black Lives Matter Plaza, about a block from the White House, where several hundred anti-Trump demonstrators had gathered.

In a pattern that kept repeating itself, those Trump supporters who approached the area were harassed, doused with water and saw their MAGA hats and pro-Trump flags snatched and burned, amid cheers. As night fell, multiple police lines kept the two sides apart.

Videos posted on social media showed some demonstrators and counterdemonstrators trading shoves, punches and slaps. A man with a bullhorn yelling "Get out of here!" was shoved and pushed to the street by a man who was then surrounded by several people and shoved and punched until he fell face first into the street. Bloody and dazed, he was picked up and walked to a police officer.

AD

The "Million MAGA March" was heavily promoted on social media, raising concerns that it could spark conflict with anti-Trump demonstrators, who have gathered near the White House in Black Lives Matter Plaza for weeks.

In preparation, police closed off wide swaths of downtown, where many stores and offices have been boarded up since Election Day. Chris Rodriguez, director of the city's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, said the police were experienced at keeping the peace.

The issues that Trump's campaign and its allies have pointed to are typical in every election: problems with signatures, secrecy envelopes and postal marks on mail-in ballots, as well as the potential for a small number of ballots miscast

or lost. With Biden leading Trump by wide margins in key battleground states, none of those issues would have any impact on the outcome of the election.

Trump's campaign has also filed legal challenges complaining that their poll watchers were unable to scrutinize the voting process. Many of those challenges have been tossed out by judges, some within hours of their filing.

A former administration official, Sebastian Gorka, whipped up the crowd by the Supreme Court by saying, "We can win because he did win." But, he added, "It's going to be tough."

FILED UNDER: WHITE HOUSE, DONALD TRUMP, DONALD TRUMP 2020, PROTESTS, PROTESTERS, MOTORCADE,

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Trump's Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany Leaves White House a Few Days Early

slate.com/news-and-politics/2021/01/trump-kayleigh-mcenany-leaves-white-house-early.html

January 16, 2021

The Slatest
By Daniel Politi
Jan 16, 20219:35 AM



White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany leaves the podium after making a statement in the James Brady Press Briefing Room on January 7, 2021 in Washington, D.C. Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images

Kayleigh McEnany, President Donald Trump's press secretary, has decided not to stick around until the end of the term and packed up her office Friday. Although she will continue officially holding the role, she will no longer be at the White House, or even in the nation's capital. McEnany will reportedly be working remotely from Tampa until Wednesday.

Kayleigh McEnany
@kayleighmcenany

So many Great Americans..

As I leave the White House, I have the privilege of reading notes from incredible servants to our country.

Men and Women whose names you do not know but who have served their country with pride until the end.

10:43 PM · Jan 15, 2021

114.8K 36.5K people are Tweeting about this

After some reports that she was leaving, McEnany sent out a tweet acknowledging that. "As I leave the White House, I have the privilege of reading notes from incredible servants to our country," McEnany tweeted. Amid the packing up she also had time for one last tiff with a journalist, pushing back against a tweet from the New York Times' Maggie Haberman, who first reported the news that McEnany was leaving the White House. Haberman had tweeted that "the last time McEnany responded to a question from me was when it was a story about herself." The press secretary said that "with one exception, the last time she emailed me was July," speculating that was because she "refused to be an anonymous source for her."

Kayleigh McEnany
@kayleighmcenany

This is the second time @maggieNYT has tried this response.

With one exception, the last time she emailed me was July.

I refused to be an anonymous source for her. Hence...

Maggie Haberman @maggieNYT
Replying to @maggieNYT
The last time McEnany responded to a question from me was when it was a story about herself.

11:18 PM · Jan 15, 2021

13.8K 4.2K people are Tweeting about this

McEnany took on the job of press secretary in April from Stephanie Grisham, who served for nine months and didn't hold a single news conference. McEnany had been a staunch defender of Trump on cable news before joining him in the White House.



Ever since Trump moved into the White House, his press secretaries often made news themselves as they tried to speak for a president who often liked to talk for himself via Twitter. Sean Spicer was the first press secretary and he only lasted seven months. Then came Sarah Huckabee Sanders who was in the role the longest, serving for almost two years until June, 2019. In her first news conference, McEnany famously told reporters, "I will never lie to you. You have my word on that." But, of course, she often did just that. "The White House press briefings have become something akin to a parody of Trump's administration" Vox's Aaron Rupar wrote in September. "Instead of providing the public with useful information, McEnany puts on a masterclass of spin, obfuscation, and propaganda that would be amusing if it wasn't such an affront to the idea that the federal government should work on behalf of the people."

Fact checking Trump's barrage of lies over the weekend

cnn.com/2020/11/16/politics/fact-check-trump-rigged-election-dominion-georgia-pennsylvania/index.html

November 16, 2020



Washington (CNN)"I WON THE ELECTION!" President Donald Trump tweeted just before midnight on Sunday night.

Trump did not win the election. So this was a fitting conclusion to his lie-filled weekend barrage of tweets, in which he continued to invent imaginary evidence in support of his attempt to deny Joe Biden's victory.

Almost nothing Trump is saying about the election is true; Twitter affixed a fact check label to more than 30 of his election-related tweets and retweets between Friday and Monday morning. And it's worth noting that former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, the lawyer whom Trump has put in charge of his election-related legal efforts, delivered a barrage of similar dishonesty on Fox News, Fox Business and Twitter.

Here's a breakdown of just some of the false claims Trump made between Friday and Monday morning:

The integrity of the election

Read More

Trump repeatedly attacked the validity of the election results, tweeting that this was a "RIGGED ELECTION," a "Rigged and Corrupt Election" and a "Rigged Election Hoax." He

also tweeted that this was the "most fraudulent Election in history" and that the results are "fake."
Facts First: *None of this is true. The election was not rigged, and there is no evidence of any fraud large enough to have changed the outcome. Officials from the Trump administration's Department of Homeland Security, along with state election officials, said in a statement last week: "The November 3rd election was the most secure in American history."*

The security of ballots

Trump tweeted that there are "millions of ballots that have been altered by Democrats, only for Democrats."
Facts First: *This is false. There is no evidence that millions of ballots were altered by Democrats. In fact, there is not currently evidence that ballots were improperly altered by anyone.*

Tech glitches

Trump tweeted, "All of the mechanical 'glitches' that took place on Election Night were really THEM getting caught trying to steal votes."
Facts First: *Again, not true. Election Day glitches are unfortunate but normal, and there is no evidence of anybody trying to use voting technology to steal votes. In the statement last week, Trump administration officials and state election officials said in bold type: "There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was in any way compromised."*

Voting deadlines

Trump alleged that there was "voting after the Election was over."
Facts First: *There is no evidence of people voting after the election was over. As in previous elections, some states accepted ballots, including military ballots, that were received by elections offices after Election Day -- but they had to be mailed on or before Election Day.*

Philadelphia

Trump quoted a 1994 article about absentee ballot fraud in a state Senate election in Philadelphia in 1993; the fraud resulted in a judge taking the rare step of invalidating the Democrat's apparent victory and ordering the Republican apparent loser to fill the seat. Trump then tweeted, "Wow. This is exactly what happened to us. Great courage by judge!"
Facts First: *This is false. There is no evidence of a fraud scheme in Philadelphia in the 2020 election.*

Observers in Pennsylvania

Trump tweeted, "700,000 ballots were not allowed to be viewed in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh which means, based on our great Constitution, we win the State of Pennsylvania!"
Facts First: *This is nonsense. It's not true that representatives of Trump's campaign were not allowed to observe ballot proceedings in Pennsylvania cities; a Trump campaign lawyer has admitted in court that the campaign's observers were permitted to watch in Philadelphia. And even if, hypothetically, Trump observers had been improperly barred, nothing in the Constitution would make Trump the automatic winner of a state in which he trails by more than 65,000 votes as counting continues.*
Poll watchers are allowed throughout the state of Pennsylvania.

Poll watchers elsewhere

Trump also made more general claims about his observers supposedly being barred -- arguing in one tweet that the election was rigged in part because there were "NO VOTE WATCHERS OR OBSERVERS allowed."
Facts First: *Even leaving Pennsylvania aside, it's not true that there were no observers allowed. Trump campaign observers were permitted wherever Biden campaign observers were permitted. For example, CNN reporters saw Republican observers at sites in Georgia, Arizona, Wisconsin and Michigan.*

Dominion Voting Systems

Trump claimed that the election was "stolen" in part by a voting equipment and software company, Dominion Voting Systems, he suggested is biased against him and also has "bum equipment."
Facts First: *There is no evidence of any wrongdoing by Dominion and no evidence that any issues with Dominion's technology affected vote counts. While one Georgia county experienced delays reporting its results due to apparent problems with the company's systems, other isolated issues that were allegedly connected to Dominion were actually caused by human error.*
"There were no Dominion software glitches and ballots were accurately tabulated. The results are 100% auditable," Dominion said in a statement last week, adding, "No credible reports or evidence of any software issues exist."
Again, the Trump administration said in the statement last week: "There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was in any way compromised."
Dominion, a Canadian company founded in 2002 with US headquarters in Denver, is the second-largest provider of voting technology in the US, according to a 2017 report from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton Public Policy Initiative. You can read a longer fact check here.

Georgia and signatures

Trump repeatedly criticized Georgia's ongoing audit of the presidential election there, in which all ballots are being recounted by hand. Trump tweeted, "The Fake recount going on in

Georgia means nothing because they are not allowing signatures to be looked at and verified. Break the unconstitutional Consent Decree!"

Facts First: *The Georgia audit is not fake in any way. While it's true that the state's recount process does not involve signature verification, voters' signatures were verified twice before the ballots were included in the count in the first place -- as Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, a Republican, hasexplained.*

Georgia residents' signatures are verified twice, first when they request an absentee ballot and second when they submit the ballot. When they submit the ballot, they sign the outer envelope -- not the ballot itself. Then, once the county verifies the signature on the envelope, the ballot is separated from the envelope before the vote is included in the count -- so no individual ballot could be connected to an individual signature in a recount, even if someone wanted to violate the bedrock American principle of the secret ballot.

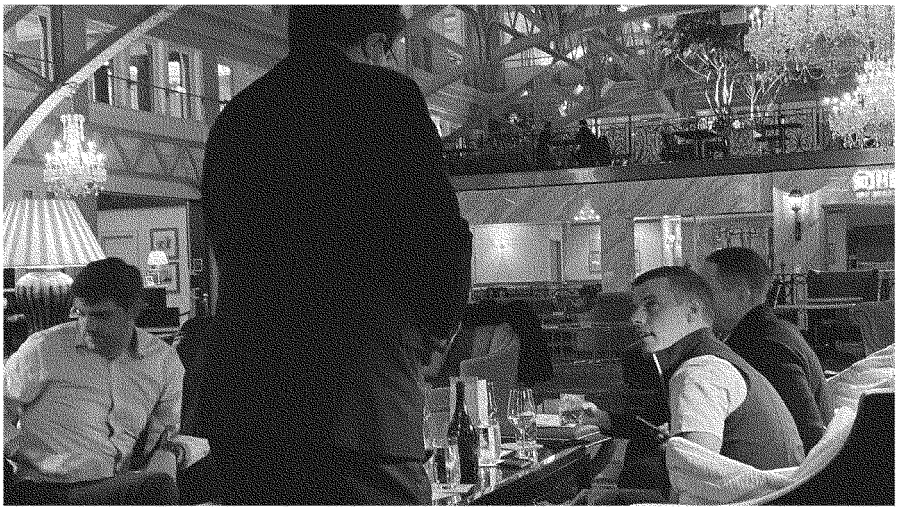
The "Consent Decree" Trump was complaining about is a March legal settlement, between the state and the Democratic Party, that did not prevent signature verification. Rather, it set rules for how and when Georgia voters must be contacted about ballots rejected because of signature issues (and other issues), so that they have time to fix these problems before the count is finalized.

This story has been updated to include Trump's tweet on Georgia's election recount.

CNN's Casey Tolan contributed to this article.

Trump tweets undermine Michigan leaders; images show Chatfield drinking at Trump hotel

freep.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/11/21/michigan-gop-trump-meeting-shirkey-chatfield/6374174002/





Trump tweets undermine Michigan leaders; images show Chatfield drinking at Trump hotel

Skepticism that Michigan lawmakers focused on COVID-19 during their meeting with Trump was amplified by the president's tweets Saturday morning.

Dave Boucher and Clara Hendrickson, Detroit Free Press Published 1:39 p.m. ET Nov. 21, 2020 | Updated 5:00 p.m. ET Nov. 21, 2020

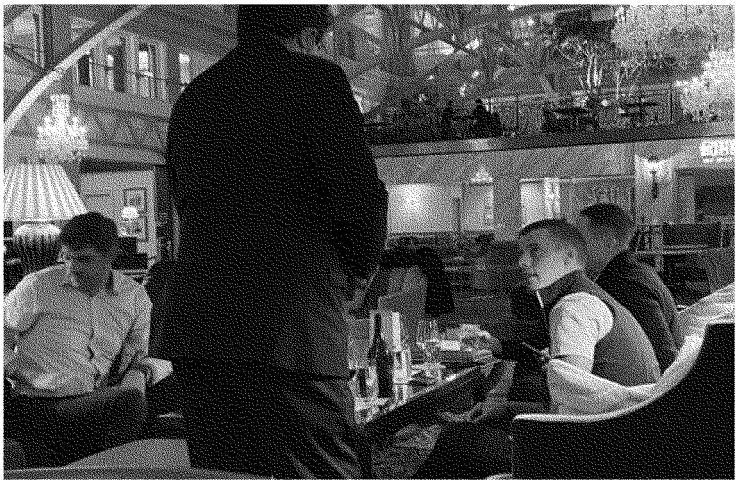
Lauren Windsor, executive producer at The Undercurrent, right, asks Michigan Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey questions after he landed in Washington, D.C. when he started to sing a hymn. Detroit Free Press

Public skepticism that Michigan's Republican legislative leaders focused on COVID-19 assistance during a Friday meeting with President Donald Trump was only amplified Saturday, when Trump's tweets implied the election was also a topic of discussion.

Photographs of House Speaker Lee Chatfield drinking and sitting, unmasked, with others at the Trump International Hotel — and the lawmakers not elaborating on what, if anything, the president asked about Michigan election results — also drew the ire of people already dubious that the president did not try to persuade the lawmakers in his ongoing efforts to undermine the will of voters.

More: Michigan GOP leaders say COVID-19 assistance, not election, focus of White House meeting

More: Michigan Speaker Chatfield: 'I won't apologize' for meeting with President Trump



House Speaker Lee Chatfield, right and Representative Jim Lilly, left have drinks at the Trump Hotel in Washington D.C. November 20, 2020. (Photo: The Undercurrent)

Chatfield, R-Levering, and state Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey, R-Clarklake, met with Trump Friday afternoon at the White House. After the meeting, the pair issued a statement that said, in part, "we have not yet been made aware of any information that would change the outcome of the election in Michigan."

President-elect Joe Biden earned approximately 154,000 more votes in the state than Trump.

However, Trump tweeted twice Saturday, responding to both lawmakers with more unfounded allegations of fraud and misconduct in Michigan.

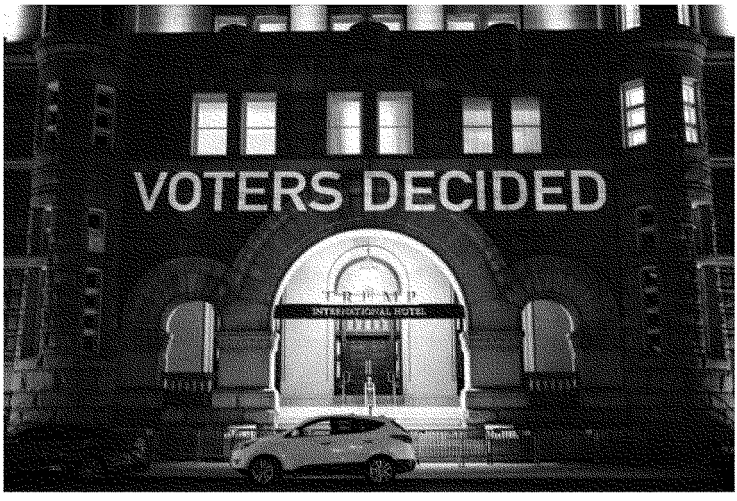
"This is true, but much different than reported by the media. We will show massive and unprecedented fraud!" Trump tweeted in response to Shirkey tweeting out his statement.

In response to a Chatfield tweet, Trump tweeted, "Massive voter fraud will be shown!"

More: Trump withdraws federal lawsuit in Michigan, citing Wayne County canvasser affidavits

More: Donald Trump called Monica Palmer after Wayne County Board of Canvassers meeting

The Trump campaign and supporters have failed repeatedly, both in court and in news conferences, to present any evidence or proof of widespread fraud. Instead, their allegations have either been deemed not credible by judges or racist by a litany of people, including Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, Michigan Democratic Party Chairwoman Lavora Barnes and others.



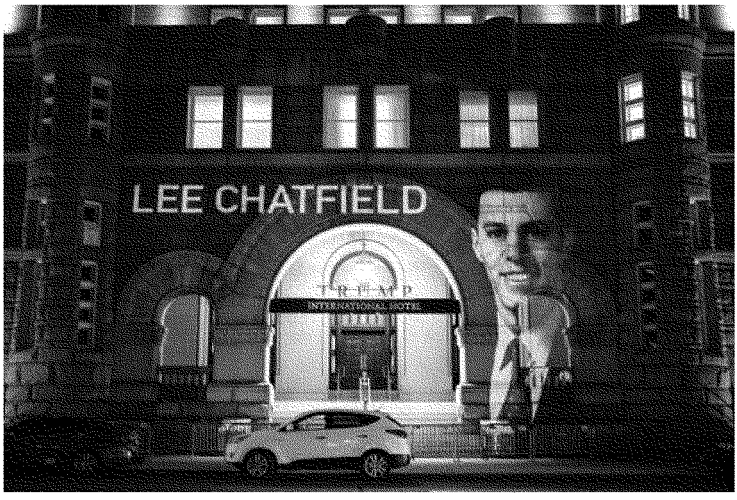
Projections of messages to Republican election officials from Michigan Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and Speaker of the House Lee Chatfield during their visit to the White House light up the front of the Trump Hotel in Washington, D.C. (Photo: André Chung)

Leading up to the White House meeting, Chatfield and Shirkey faced an enormous public backlash for agreeing to see the president. Chatfield, who appeared repeatedly with Trump at events in Michigan ahead of Election Day, defended the decision.

Chatfield, Shirkey and other Michigan lawmakers, including House Speaker-elect Justin Wentworth, R-Clare, appeared to be staying at Trump's hotel in Washington, D.C. Images emerged online hours after the White House meeting showing Chatfield and several other men drinking what appeared to be expensive champagne while sitting inside the hotel. None wore masks. The images were also obtained by the Free Press.

> I guess MI House Speaker @LeeChatfield + @RepJimLillyMI were in a celebratory mood last night, drinking Dom Perignon at the Trump Hotel til midnight pic.twitter.com/s7FDpDdshm
>
> — Lauren Windsor (@lawindsor) November 21, 2020

The Free Press asked representatives for Chatfield and Shirkey about whether the president asked the lawmakers about taking actions in an effort to change the election outcome, whether the president's tweets undercut the lawmakers' statement issued Friday and how the lawmakers paid for their travel and accommodations.



Projections of messages to Republican election officials from Michigan Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and Speaker of the House Lee Chatfield during their visit to the White House light up the front of the Trump Hotel in Washington, D.C. (Photo: André Chung)

A spokesman for Chatfield acknowledged receiving the questions, including a separate question about the images of the speaker drinking at the Trump hotel. Chatfield paid for his own expenses, a spokesman said. He did not clarify if the speaker used campaign or personal funds, and did not provide further comment.

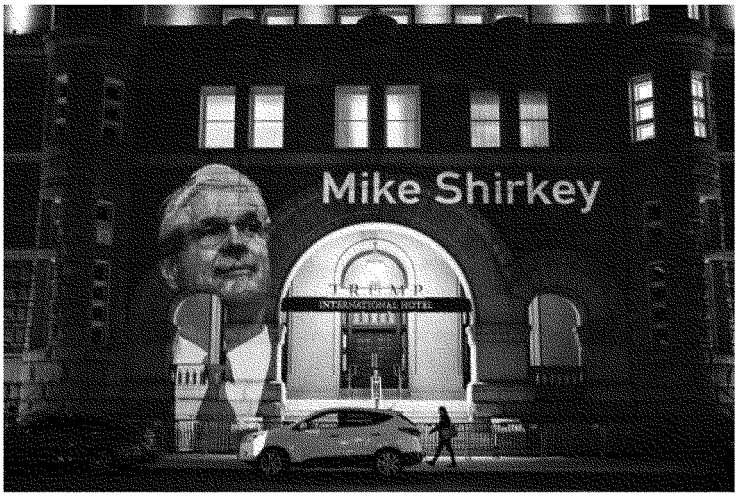
However, the speaker did change his cover image on Twitter to a picture that showed his own face projected on the front of the Trump hotel. Activists projected images of Chatfield and Shirkey on the hotel Friday, along with messages stating "the world is watching."

A spokeswoman for Shirkey said he covered the cost of his trip, including accommodations. While she said no taxpayer dollars were used, she would not specify whether he used campaign funds or personal money to pay for those costs. Shirkey declined additional comment through the spokeswoman.

More: Biden campaign: Trump efforts to derail Michigan election results an 'abuse of office'

More: GOP Senate candidate John James asks Board of State Canvassers to delay certification

The actions undermine the lawmakers' assertions that they went to the White House merely to discuss COVID-19 assistance, argued critics in comments that made the images ubiquitous on Twitter.



Projections of messages to Republican election officials from Michigan Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and Speaker of the House Lee Chatfield during their visit to the White House light up the front of the Trump Hotel in Washington, D.C. (Photo: André Chung)

"Close your eyes and try to imagine the reaction if someone photographed Gov. Whitmer in a Washington DC hotel bar, with a $500 bottle of Dom Pérignon, without a mask, on the day Michigan had nearly 10,000 new cases of COVID-19 and 53 deaths," tweeted Zach Pohl, deputy chief of staff for Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Despite the fear expressed by many that Republicans in the Michigan Legislature may attempt to change the outcome of the election in the state, there is essentially nothing the legislators can do. Both Chatfield and Shirkey have indicated they would not take action to undermine the results.

The idea that the Michigan Legislature could delay this process or appoint its own set of pro-Trump electors is far-fetched, legal experts say.

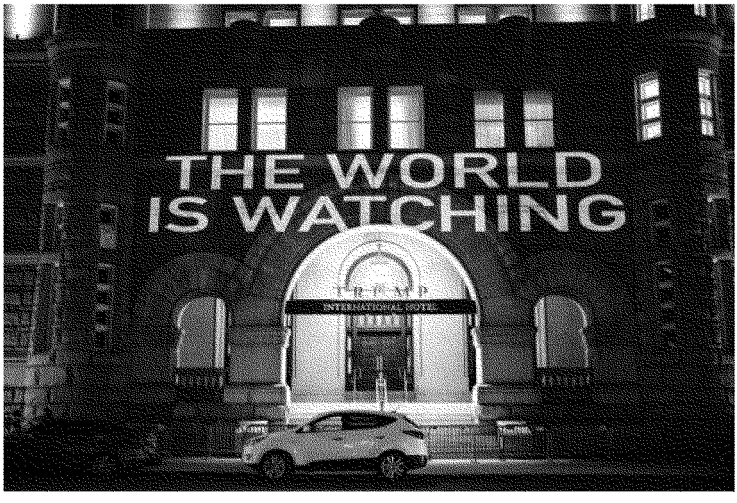
Michigan election law provides no role for the Legislature in the certification of the state's election results or appointment of electors. Under Michigan law, the state's political parties nominated individuals to serve as presidential electors during their August conventions. The governor will certify the electors for the party whose nominee won the state's popular vote. If the Legislature wants to change this process, it would have to pass a bill that Whitmer would almost certainly veto.

More: Secretary of State: Post-election 'performance audit' planned in Wayne County

More: Who makes up the Board of State Canvassers?

The Board of State Canvassers will meet Monday to certify the statewide results and determine the winners for federal and state office. With Michigan's 83 counties having already transmitted their certified results to the Secretary of State's Office, the state board is required under Michigan election law to certify the statewide totals.

The campaign of John James, a Republican candidate for U.S. Senate, has asked the board to delay certification so that an audit of the Wayne County vote totals can be performed. The Associated Press and others have indicated U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, a Democrat, won the race.



Projections of messages to Republican election officials from Michigan Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and Speaker of the House Lee Chatfield during their visit to the White House light up the front of the Trump Hotel in Washington, D.C. (Photo: André Chung)

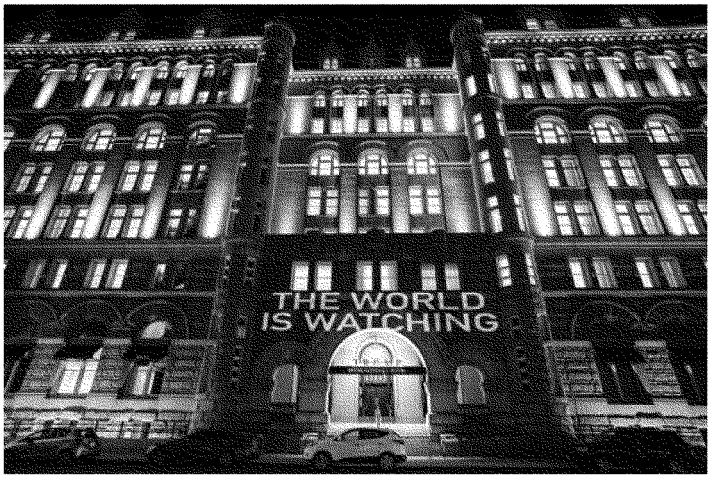
On Saturday, the Michigan Republican Party echoed this request. While both have argued there are irregularities in vote counting in Detroit, neither has indicated whether they have evidence or believe any changes would alter the outcome of the election.

"These issues cannot simply be ignored away or brushed under the rug, they must be confronted and thoroughly examined," said Ronna McDaniel, chairwoman of the Republican National Committee, and Laura Cox, chairwoman of the Michigan Republican Party, in a joint statement.

Wayne County already canvassed and certified these results, and Michigan law only allows for an audit or recount after statewide certification of results. Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, has already pledged to conduct a "post-election performance audit" in Wayne County.

If Michigan certifies its results before Dec. 8, Congress is required to accept Michigan's electoral votes. On Dec. 14 Michigan's presidential electors will convene and cast the state's Electoral College vote.

Contact Dave Boucher at dboucher@freepress.com or 313-938-4591. Follow him on Twitter @Dave_Boucher1.



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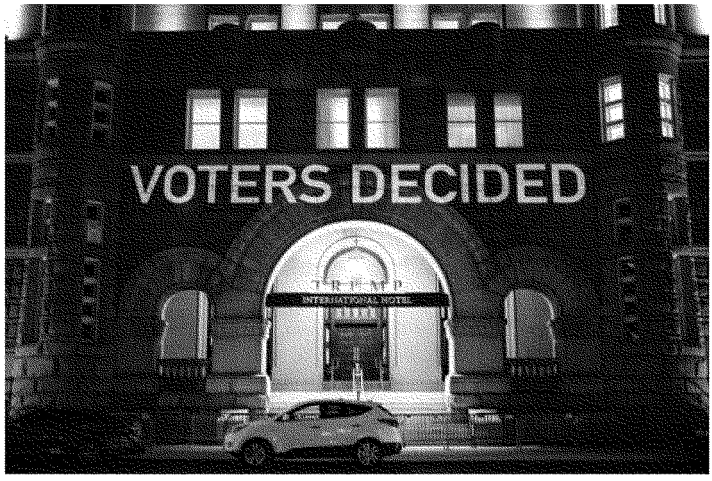

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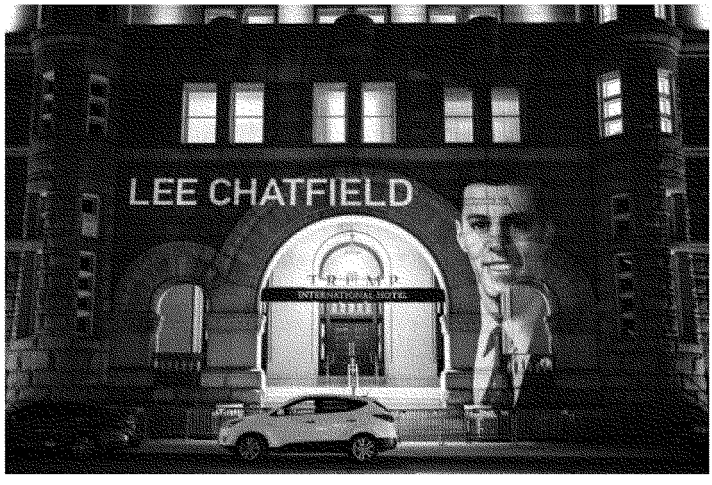

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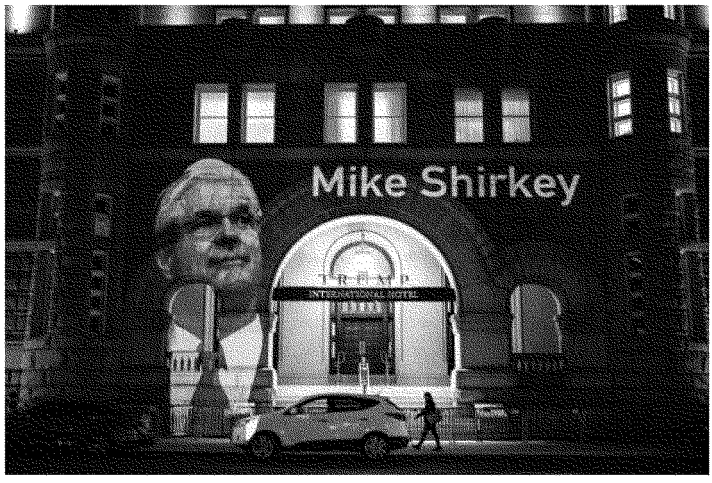

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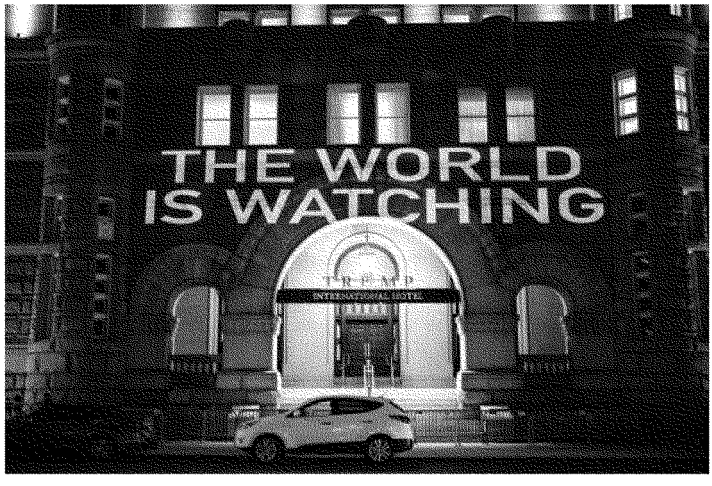

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Trump lowers the White House flag after pressure from both Republicans and Democrats

DAVID CHOI | JAN 11, 2021, 04:22 IST



President Donald Trump. BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP via Getty Images

akers requested t Donald Trump t e White ...'s flag to half-st... ...or of a US Capitol ... police officer who died after the deadly Capitol Hill siege on Wednesday.

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- **On Sunday, days after the police officer's death, Trump lowered the White House's flag.**
- **"He gave his life protecting our nation's Capitol, its Members, and all who worked inside from a violent mob intent on harm," Republican Rep. Nancy Mace of South Carolina said in a letter addressed to the Trump.**
- **"For every Republican that sees this and stays silent, I don't want to hear that they support the police every again," Auchincloss said to Insider, shortly before the White House's decision to act.**

After pressure from lawmakers, President Donald Trump (https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-no-order-for-flags-at-half-mast-for-officer-killed-by-capitol-mob-2021-1) lowered the White House's flag to half-staff, days after a US Capitol Hill police officer died amidst the deadly Capitol Hill siege.

Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick, 42, was hit with a fire extinguisher as a mob proceeded to lay siege to Capitol Hill, law enforcement officials said to the Associated Press (https://apnews.com/article/capitol-police-death-brian-sicknick-46933a828d7b12de7e3d5620a8a04583). Sicknick later collapsed and was placed on a ventilator in critical condition, family members told ProPublica (https://www.propublica.org/article/officer-brian-sicknick-capitol).

Sicknick was a member of the force since 2008, and also served in the New Jersey Air National Guard.

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Four others died after the riot. The incident is under investigation.

"He gave his life protecting our nation's Capitol, its Members, and all who worked inside from a violent mob intent on harm," Republican Rep. Nancy Mace of South Carolina said in a letter addressed to the Trump on Sunday, before the White House lowered its flag.

"He made the ultimate sacrifice, for the greater glory, and laid down his life in protection of our democracy," she added. "In honor of his bravery and recognition of his life, the flag over the Capitol dome has been lowered to half-mast; we ask that the flag flown above the White House be ordered to do the same."

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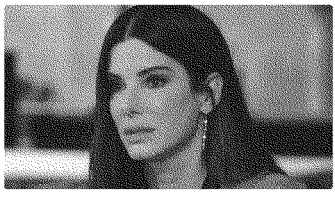
Our hearts go out to Sandra Bullock.



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Riot police clear the hallway inside the Capitol, January 6, 2021 in Washington, D.C. Kent Nishimura / Los Angeles Times via Getty Images

In a statement on Sunday afternoon, Trump said he ordered the lowering of flags at the White House and military bases "as a sign of respect for the service and sacrifice."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had already ordered flags at the Capitol to lower its flags in honor of Sicknick, who is the fourth Capitol Hill police officer to die in the line of duty. Buildings in state capitals had also already lowered their flags.

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"Our hearts are with his family and all of our fellow public servants, our Congressional delegation and the brave men and women in uniform who protect us," Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a statement on

. "In Officer Sicku nory, I have calle lags over ol of the State of ı to fly at half-sta idarity with those that were lowered in his memory over our nation's Capitol."

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In 1998, President Bill Clinton ordered the White House's flags to be lowered after a gunman killed two officers at the Capitol.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment as to why it took days to observe the tradition. Trump, who promised to implement "law and order" throughout the country, frequently touted his support from police unions.

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Trump was previously criticized after showing some wariness in honoring notable figures. After John McCain's death in 2018, Trump was reportedly reluctant in lowering the White House's flag in honor of the late Republican senator, according to The Atlantic (https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/09/trump-americans-who-died-at-war-are-losers-and-suckers/615997/).

Democratic Rep. Jake Auchincloss of Massachusetts, a former Marine Corps officer, took note.

"For every Republican that sees this and stays silent, I don't want to hear that they support the police every again," Auchincloss told Insider, shortly before the White House's decision to act.

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A GoFundMe (https://www.gofundme.com/f/95xqrr-officer-brian-d-sicknick-memorial) page that was created in support of Sicknick's family surpassed its initial goal of $250,000.

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Before the Capitol Riot, Calls for Cash and Talk of Revolution

A network of far-right agitators across the country spent weeks organizing and raising money for a mass action to overturn President Trump's election loss.

By David D. Kirkpatrick, Mike McIntire and Christiaan Triebert

Jan. 16, 2021

Keith Lee, an Air Force veteran and former police detective, spent the morning of Jan. 6 casing the entrances to the Capitol.

In online videos, the 41-year-old Texan pointed out the flimsiness of the fencing. He cheered the arrival, long before President Trump's rally at the other end of the mall, of far-right militiamen encircling the building. Then, armed with a bullhorn, Mr. Lee called out for the mob to rush in, until his voice echoed from the dome of the Rotunda.

Yet even in the heat of the event, Mr. Lee paused for some impromptu fund-raising. "If you couldn't make the trip, give five to 10 bucks," he told his viewers, seeking donations for the legal costs of two jailed "patriots," a leader of the far-right Proud Boys and an ally who had clashed with the police during an armed incursion at Oregon's statehouse.

Much is still unknown about the planning and financing of the storming of the Capitol, aiming to challenge Mr. Trump's electoral defeat. What is clear is that it was driven, in part, by a largely ad hoc network of low-budget agitators, including far-right militants, Christian conservatives and ardent adherents of the QAnon conspiracy theory. Mr. Lee is all three. And the sheer breadth of the movement he joined suggests it may be far more difficult to confront than a single organization.



Rioters after they breached the doors of the Capitol. Jason Andrew for The New York Times

In the months leading up to the riot, Mr. Lee had helped organize a series of pro-Trump car caravans around the country, including one that temporarily blockaded a Biden campaign bus in Texas and another that briefly shut down a Hudson River bridge in the New York City suburbs. To help pay for dozens of caravans to meet at the Jan. 6 rally, he had teamed up with an online fund-raiser in Tampa, Fla., who secured money from small donors and claimed to pass out tens of thousands of dollars.

Theirs was one of many grass-roots efforts to bring Trump supporters to the Capitol, often amid calls for revolution, if not outright violence. On an online ride-sharing forum, Patriot Caravans for 45, more than 4,000 members coordinated travel from as far away as California and South Dakota. Some 2,000 people donated at least $181,700 to another site, Wild Protest, leaving messages urging ralliers to halt the certification of the vote.

Oath Keepers, a self-identified militia whose members breached the Capitol, had solicited donations online to cover "gas, airfare, hotels, food and equipment." Many others raised money through the crowdfunding site GoFundMe or, more often, its explicitly Christian counterpart, GiveSendGo. (On Monday, the money transfer service PayPal stopped working with GiveSendGo because of its links to the violence at the Capitol.)

A few prominent firebrands, an opaque pro-Trump nonprofit and at least one wealthy donor had campaigned for weeks to amplify the president's false claims about his defeat, stoking the anger of his supporters.

Amy Kremer is one of the leaders of Women for America First, which helped sponsor rallies ahead of the riot. Jacquelyn Martin/Associated Press

A chief sponsor of many rallies leading up to the riot, including the one featuring the president on Jan. 6, was Women for America First, a conservative nonprofit. Its leaders include Amy Kremer, who rose to prominence in the Tea Party movement, and her daughter, Kylie Jane Kremer, 30. She started a "Stop the Steal" Facebook page on Nov. 4. More than 320,000 people signed up in less than a day, but the platform promptly shut it down for fears of inciting violence. The group has denied any violent intent.

By far the most visible financial backer of Women for America First's efforts was Mike Lindell, a founder of the MyPillow bedding company, identified on a now-defunct website as one of the "generous sponsors" of a bus tour promoting Mr. Trump's attempt to overturn the election. In addition, he was an important supporter of Right Side Broadcasting, an obscure pro-Trump television network that provided blanket coverage of Trump rallies after the vote, and a podcast run by the former Trump adviser Stephen K. Bannon that also sponsored the bus tour.

"I put everything I had into the last three weeks, financial and everything," Mr. Lindell said in a mid-December television interview.

In a tweet the same month, he urged Mr. Trump to "impose martial law" to seize ballots and voting machines. Through a representative, Mr. Lindell said he only supported the bus tour "prior to December 14th" and was not a financial sponsor of any events after that, including the rally on Jan. 6. He continues to stand by the president's claims and met with Mr. Trump at the White House on Friday.

Mike Lindell, the head of MyPillow, helped fund a bus tour that promoted President Trump's false election claims. Erin Scott/Reuters

By late December, the president himself was injecting volatility into the organizing efforts, tweeting an invitation to a Washington rally that would take place as Congress gathered to certify the election results.

"Be there, will be wild!" Mr. Trump wrote.

The next day, a new website, Wild Protest, was registered and quickly emerged as an organizing hub for the president's most zealous supporters. It appeared to be connected to Ali Alexander, a conspiracy theorist who vowed to stop the certification by "marching hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of patriots to sit their butts in D.C. and close that city down."

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Mr. Alexander could not be reached for comment, but in a video posted to Twitter last week, he denied any responsibility for the violence.

While other groups like Women for America First were promoting the rally where Mr. Trump would speak — at the Ellipse, about a mile west of the Capitol — the Wild Protest website directed Trump supporters to a different location: the doorsteps of Congress.

Wild Protest linked to three hotels with discounted rates and another site for coordinating travel plans. It also raised donations from thousands of individuals, according to archived versions of a web portal used to collect them. The website has since been taken down, and it is not clear what the money was used for.

"The time for words has passed, action alone will save our Republic," a user donating $250 wrote, calling congressional certification of the vote "treasonous."

Capitol Riot Fallout

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- Here is what our reporters are seeing.
- Armed protesters have gathered at state capitols in Ohio, Texas, Oregon and Michigan.
- Scenes from state capitols across the country under high alert.

Another contributor gave $47 and posted: "Fight to win our country back using whatever means necessary."

Mr. Lee, who sought to raise legal-defense money the morning before the riot, did not respond to requests for comment. He has often likened supporters of overturning the election to the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and has said he is willing to give his life for the cause.

A sales manager laid off at an equipment company because of the pandemic, he has said that he grew up as a conservative Christian in East Texas. Air Force records show that he enlisted a month after the Sept. 11 attacks and served for four years, leaving as a senior airman. Later, in 2011 and 2012, he worked for a private security company at a U.S. military base in Afghanistan.

In between, he also worked as a police detective in McKinney, Texas.

He had never been politically active, he has said. But during Mr. Trump's presidency, Mr. Lee began to immerse himself in the online QAnon conspiracy theory. Its adherents hold that Mr. Trump is trying to save America from a shadowy ring of pedophiles who control the government and the Democratic Party. Mr. Lee has said that resonated with his experience dealing with child crimes as a police officer.

His active support for Mr. Trump began last August when he organized a caravan of drivers from around the state to show their support for the president by circling the capital, Austin. That led him to found a website, MAGA Drag the Interstate, to organize Trump caravans around the country.

By December, Mr. Lee had achieved enough prominence that he was included in a roster of speakers at a news conference preceding a "March for Trump" rally in Washington.

"We are at this precipice" of "good versus evil," Mr. Lee declared. "I am going to fight for my president. I am going to fight for what is right."

He threw himself into corralling fellow "patriots" to meet in Washington on Jan. 6, and at the end of last month he began linking his website with the Tampa organizer to raise money for participants' travel.

Capitol Riot Fallout

From Riot to Impeachment

The riot inside the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, followed a rally at which President Trump made an inflammatory speech to his supporters, questioning the results of the election. Here's a look at what happened and the ongoing fallout:

- As this video shows, poor planning and a restive crowd encouraged by President Trump set the stage for the riot.
- A two hour period was crucial to turning the rally into the riot.
- Several Trump administration officials, including cabinet members Betsy DeVos and Elaine Chao, announced that they were stepping down as a result of the riot.
- Federal prosecutors have charged more than 70 people, including some who appeared in

SEE MORE

The fund-raiser, who has identified himself as a web designer named Thad Williams, has said in a podcast that sexual abuse as a child eventually led him to the online world of QAnon.

While others "made of steel" are cut out to be "warriors against evil" and "covered in the blood and sweat of that part," Mr. Williams said, he sees himself as more of "a chaplain and a healer." In 2019, he set up a website to raise money for QAnon believers to travel to Trump rallies. He could not be reached for comment.

Trump supporters boarded a bus from Massachusetts to Washington on the night before the riot. Joseph Prezioso/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

By the gathering at the Capitol, he claimed to have raised and distributed at least $30,000 for transportation costs. Expressions of thanks posted on Twitter appear to confirm that he allocated money, and a day after the assault the online services PayPal and Stripe shut down his accounts.

Mr. Lee's MAGA Drag the Interstate site, for its part, said it had organized car caravans of more than 600 people bound for the rally. It used military-style shorthand to designate routes in different regions across the country, from Alpha to Zulu, and a logo on the site combined Mr. Trump's distinctive hairstyle with Pepe the Frog, a symbol of the alt-right that has been used by white supremacists.

Participants traded messages about where to park together overnight on the streets of Washington. Some arranged midnight rendezvous at highway rest stops or Waffle House restaurants to drive together on the morning of the rally.

On the evening of Jan. 5, Mr. Lee broadcast a video podcast from a crowd of chanting Trump supporters in the Houston airport, waiting to board a flight to Washington. "We are there for a show of force," he promised, suggesting he anticipated street fights even before dawn. "Gonna see if we can do a little playing in the night."

A co-host of the podcast — a self-described Army veteran from Washington State — appealed for donations to raise $250,000 bail money for Chandler Pappas, 27.

Chandler Pappas outside the the Oregon statehouse last month.
Mathieu Lewis-Rolland/Reuters

Two weeks earlier in Salem, Ore., during a protest against Covid-19 restrictions, Mr. Pappas had sprayed six police officers with mace while leading an incursion into the State Capitol building and carrying a semiautomatic rifle, according to a police report. Mr. Pappas, whose lawyer did not return a phone call seeking comment, had been linked to the far-right Proud Boys and an allied local group called Patriot Prayer.

"American citizens feel like they've been attacked. Fear's reaction is anger, anger's reaction is patriotism and voilà — you get a war," said Mr. Lee's co-host, who gave his name as Rampage.

He directed listeners to donate to the bail fund through GiveSendGo, and thanked them for helping to raise $100,000 through the same site for the legal defense of Enrique Tarrio, a leader of the Proud Boys who is accused of vandalizing a historically Black church in Washington.

By 10:45 a.m. the next day, more than an hour before Mr. Trump spoke, Mr. Lee was back online broadcasting footage of himself at the Capitol.

"If you died today and you went to heaven, can you look George Washington in the face and say that you've fought for this country?" he asked.

By noon, he was reporting that "backup" was already arriving, bypassing the Trump speech and rally. The Proud Boys and Oath Keepers were among the groups that went directly to the Capitol.

"Guys, we got the Three Percent here! The Three Percent here that loves this country and wants to fight!" Mr. Lee reported a little later, referring to another militant group. "We need to surround this place."

Backed by surging crowds, Mr. Lee had made his way into the Rotunda and by 3 p.m. — after a fellow assailant had been shot, police officers had been injured and local authorities were pleading for help — he was back outside using his megaphone to urge others into the building. "If we do it together," he insisted, "there's no violence!"

When he knew that lawmakers had evacuated, he declared victory: "We have done our job," he shouted.

Reporting was contributed by Kitty Bennett, Stella Cooper, Cora Engelbrecht, Sheera Frenkel and Haley Willis.

Video production by Ainara Tiefenthäler.

The New York Times https://nyti.ms/3qOvMgy

The 25th Amendment Can Remove Trump, but We Shouldn't Stop There

The magnitude of the current crisis calls for two constitutional measures: the 25th Amendment and impeachment.

By David Landau and Rosalind Dixon
Mr. Landau and Ms. Dixon are law professors.

Jan. 7, 2021

After a mob incited by President Trump stormed and occupied the Capitol, American democracy needs protecting now — and not just now but in the coming weeks and years as well.

There are reports of preliminary discussions within the administration about invoking the 25th Amendment, a provision in the Constitution that provides a process to declare a sitting president no longer capable of fulfilling his duties. Another call is coming from a surprising source: The National Association of Manufacturers, not normally an organization known for this kind of political activism, said that Vice President Mike Pence "should seriously consider working with the cabinet" to invoke the amendment to remove President Trump and "preserve democracy." People are invoking the 25th Amendment on the grounds that Mr. Trump is not fit to hold office and incited the chaos that unfolded on Capitol Hill — and may unfold again.

There are also calls from a number of Democratic representatives to impeach and remove the president for his actions around the illegal and violent takeover of one of the most hallowed traditions in American democracy.

The magnitude of the current crisis calls for both of these measures. The threat the president poses to our democracy is not short-lived and must be cut off urgently and decisively — before it leads to even greater degradation to American democratic processes and traditions. It will need to happen quickly, even with other demands pressing on our country's leadership like certifying the election results, rolling out the coronavirus vaccine and calming a nation in crisis.

To do this, the cabinet and Congress must deploy the 25th Amendment and impeachment in sequence.

First, Vice President Pence and a majority of the cabinet should invoke Section 4 of the 25th Amendment in order to make a declaration that Mr. Trump is "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office." This would immediately suspend, but not remove, Mr. Trump from the exercise of his presidential duties and appoint Mr. Pence as acting president. The 25th Amendment would not and should not be used as a lasting solution in a case of this kind, but rather as a temporary measure to sideline a demonstrably unfit and dangerous actor who is fueling anti-democratic action.

Second, the House should quickly draw up and pass articles of impeachment. And then the Senate should hold a fair — but immediate and efficient — trial both to remove President Trump from office and, as important, to disqualify him from serving in public office in the future. Precedent suggests that the Senate would likely need to hold two separate votes on removal and disqualification, although the disqualification vote may require only a simple majority to be approved, as opposed to the two-thirds vote necessary for removal from office.

Disqualification is necessary given Mr. Trump's anti-democratic response to the 2020 election and the continuing danger that he will pose to constitutional norms if allowed to flirt with a return to power in 2024. Indeed, the importance of disqualification in this case is such that the Congress should proceed with impeachment even if Mr. Trump's term in office has already concluded.

A public vote and rapid trial in the Senate would give much-needed legitimacy to actions to remove Mr. Trump from office. By forcing Republicans to stand up for democracy and against the president's actions, it would also reaffirm bipartisan support for the fundamental principles of American democracy. Further, while the 25th Amendment is intended mainly for illness or other objective incapacities, impeachment offers an appropriate moral response to the president's conduct, including incitement to violence and attacks on basic democratic norms.

Why do this with only about two weeks left in President Trump's term? Because we must defend our democracy for all Americans, now. And we must preserve our democracy for future Americans. We must ensure a field of potential Republican presidential hopefuls in 2024 who have integrity. And we must reassure the world, and especially would-be authoritarian regimes, about what United States policy will be on questions of freedom and self-rule now and in the future.

The Constitution does not protect against every threat currently facing our democracy. But it contains a range of useful safeguards. And it is high time to deploy them — with urgency.

David Landau is a professor and associate dean for international programs at Florida State University College of Law. Rosalind Dixon is professor of law at the Gilbert and Tobin Center of Public Law at UNSW Sydney, Australia, and was recently a visiting professor at Harvard Law School.

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U.S. LEGAL NEWS

NOVEMBER 23, 2020 / 4:30 PM / UPDATED 2 MONTHS AGO

Georgia sets timeline for Trump-requested vote recount

By David Morgan

FILE PHOTO: Employees of the Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections process ballots in Atlanta, Georgia U.S., November 4, 2020. REUTERS/Brandon Bell

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Georgia will begin recounting votes from the Nov. 3 election again on Tuesday at 9 a.m. EST (1400 GMT), in response to a request from President Donald Trump's campaign, a state official said.

The new recount, which is not expected to alter certified results that show President-elect Joe Biden won the election, will end at midnight on Dec. 2, according to Gabriel Sterling, the Georgia official who oversees voting systems. The recount will be conducted by electronic scanners.

Georgia certified its election results last week after conducting a laborious manual recount.

The Trump campaign petitioned for another recount on Saturday. Georgia law allows a candidate to request a vote recount within two business days of certification, if the margin is less than 0.5 percent. Biden defeated Trump in Georgia by a 0.26 percent margin.

The Trump campaign has also demanded an audit of the voter signatures that accompanied mail-in ballots. Sterling offered no definitive response, but told reporters that such an action would be unlikely unless ordered by a court.

Republican Trump has been defeated repeatedly in his persistent legal battle to overturn the election results in a string of states and prevent Democrat Biden from being sworn in on Jan. 20. Trump and his campaign have made unsubstantiated claims of widespread voter fraud.

Electors in each state will convene as the Electoral College on Dec. 14 to formally select the next president. Biden won 306 electoral votes, 36 over the 270 threshold needed to win.

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LAWFARE

25TH AMENDMENT

Can Trump Be Stopped?

By David Priess, Jack Goldsmith Thursday, January 7, 2021, 8:05 AM

The hours since Wednesday afternoon have seen a tidal wave of calls for Donald Trump to lose the powers and duties of the office of the presidency for his role in the historic storming of the U.S. Capitol. There is a new push for impeachment. And news reports suggest that members of Trump's Cabinet are considering invoking the 25th Amendment to take from Trump, in the words of the amendment, "the powers and duties of the office" he holds. (We should note that this reporting is thinly sourced; Maggie Haberman of the New York Times reported last night that a source merely says "the 25th Amendment discussions are staff-based within the administration and with some Republicans on the Hill, and that they're not particularly focused.")

This comes on the heels of a very strange series of events from inside the executive branch, including a statement on Wednesday afternoon by the secretary of defense that after consulting with Vice President Pence and top congressional leaders—but seemingly not President Trump—he was "activating D.C. National Guard to assist federal and local law enforcement as they work to peacefully address the situation."

Shortly before 4 a.m. this morning, a reconvened Congress finally confirmed President-elect Biden's presidential victory. And then President Trump issued this statement: "Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will be an orderly transition on January 20th." But it is far from clear that Trump will stick by, or do what it takes to carry out, this pledge.

Talking of removing a president is easy. But getting rid of one is hard, as it should be in a constitutional republic with a well-established system for electing its leaders. Any decision to remove a president is also fraught with peril. This post reviews the basic law governing the questions about taking away a president's powers.

1. What did the president do to trigger discussion of an urgent removal?

In brief, Trump summoned yesterday's mob to Washington and incited it with pronouncements like "You'll never take back our country with weakness." The mob marched on the Capitol; breached, ransacked, and damaged the building; disrupted the constitutional process for counting electoral votes; and occupied the Senate chamber. Four people died. After seeing the destruction and terror that the mob wrought, Trump released a video and tweet justifying and effectively condoning its actions, while at the same time meekly calling for peace.

There is little controversy about Trump's culpability in the day's events. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, the third highest-ranking Republican in the House of Representatives, told Fox News, "We just had a violent mob assault the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to prevent us from carrying out our constitutional duty. There's no question the president formed the mob, the president incited the mob, the president addressed the mob. He lit the flame." Sen. Mitt Romney said, "What happened here today was an insurrection, incited by the president of the United States." And momentum appears to be building for something dramatic to be done about it; even Vermont's Republican Governor Phil Scott tweeted, "President Trump should resign or be removed from office by his Cabinet, or by the Congress."

2. Can Trump be impeached and removed quickly enough to matter?

Yes, but Congress would have to roll back much of the pomp and circumstance it has developed around the process.

With his incitement of the attack on the Capitol building, Trump cleared the hurdle of "high crimes and misdemeanors," which, along with treason and bribery, is a constitutional trigger for impeachment. Articles of impeachment could be finalized within minutes and voted on with minimal debate. The Senate could then immediately convene to try the president. The Constitution requires "the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present" for conviction. It does not, however, require a lengthy trial or specific procedure, even though Congress has developed elaborate rules to govern—and elongate—the impeachment and trial process. The Senate played fast and loose with its own rules to facilitate Trump's acquittal a year ago and could do the same in the other direction if its members had the will to secure a quick conviction.

But therein lies the main rub. The House and the Senate would need to meet to change their rules and allow an expedited process. Could it be done? Yes. Would it be easy? Not so much.

There's a lot of machinery to move for that to happen in a timely fashion, and the president has only 13 days left in office. The president's most rabid supporters in both chambers could still delay the rule changes needed to see this process through with due haste. And principles of justice would demand that President Trump, even in these circumstances, be afforded an adequate defense, necessarily prolonging any trial.

A second Trump impeachment, followed this time by conviction, would probably include the Senate's disqualification of Trump from any future federal office, including the presidency—an option that only the impeachment and removal process offers. But the impeachment route takes a few days, even in a fastest-case scenario. In this intervening period an angry, vengeful Trump could do great additional damage.

3. What about using the 25th Amendment?

Section 4 of the amendment creates a process by which the chief executive can be declared "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office." The drafters of the 25th Amendment meant it to apply more to cases of true presidential incapacity—like a massive stroke or a coma—than to instances of very bad judgment. But because the relevant triggering criterion, the president's inability "to discharge the powers and duties of his office," is undefined in the amendment, a president who has proved himself persistently unable to perform the duties of the office can warrant Section 4's application, even without obvious physical impairment. This is why entities from the Washington Post to the National Association of Manufacturers have called for a 25th Amendment solution right away. Law professor and 25th Amendment expert Brian Kalt explained in 2019 two scenarios in which activating Section 4 might be appropriate:

The first is a president whose impairment is severe enough that the helm is, effectively, unmanned, even if he is still somehow able to claim that he is able to discharge his powers and duties. This could arise for a number of reasons, such as a severe stroke, a psychotic break or moderate dementia. …

Then there are cases in which the president might be not quite so incapacitated but, nevertheless, impaired to the point of teeing up a disaster. Consider, for example, an unhinged president who orders a capricious nuclear strike against another country—the problem here is not that the president is "unable" so much as all too able to wipe out millions of lives.

Neither of these scenarios quite fits the current situation, but the latter is now closer to reality than when Kalt wrote this for *Lawfare*. We believe that Trump's unhinged postelection behavior, his manifest inability or unwillingness for weeks to distinguish reality from fiction about the results of the election, and his detachment from exercising the basic responsibilities of the office would meet the "unable to perform" standard of the 25th Amendment. (The definitional issue is almost certainly one on which the vice president and the principal executive officers would have the final say, with both houses of Congress playing a role in the event of a presidential challenge; the matter almost certainly cannot be reviewed in court.)

The 25th Amendment's Section 4 puts the vice president up front in the decision to assess the president's ability. Without the vice president's assent, no declaration of disability can occur. If "a majority of … the principal officers of the executive departments" (effectively the Cabinet) agrees with the vice president's assertion of disability, then presidential powers would transfer to the vice president temporarily for the duration of the disability. When the vice president and the majority of the principal officers transmit to the Senate's president pro tempore and the House's speaker their determination, the vice president becomes acting president.

The president can challenge the declaration. If he does, the vice president and the majority of the principal officers of the executive departments can disagree with the president's assertion of ability, and they have four days to again declare that he remains unable. The dominant understanding of the 25th Amendment is that the vice president continues as acting president during this four-day period. If the vice president and the majority of the principal officers resubmit their determination of disability, the vice president remains as acting president until Congress "decide[s] the issue." If Congress within 21 days (measured in various ways) "determines by two-thirds vote of both Houses that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall continue to discharge the same as Acting President; otherwise, the President shall resume the powers and duties of his office."

For nearly four years, it has seemed exceedingly improbable that Vice President Mike Pence had it in him to work with Cabinet members to remove the man to whom he's been fiercely loyal. But Wednesday's terror—against the background of Trump's incitement and his other untoward postelection behavior—goes beyond anything Pence has seen before (that we yet know of). Events could move him to put the country's well-being before his subservience to the president. After all, unlike Trump's actions in the Ukraine affair, his newest actions incited active insurrection.

4. What next?

Invocation of the 25th Amendment and the impeachment route are not mutually exclusive. The vice president and the majority of the principal officers could prevent the president from exercising the powers of his office by activating Section 4, giving Congress time to impeach, convict, and remove the president—and disqualify him from serving in federal office again.

The real benefit of the 25th amendment is its efficiency. The vice president and the principal officers of the executive departments can make their decision free from parliamentary rules and transmit the results to Capitol Hill within minutes—quickly enough (in theory) to stop Trump from trying to derail the proceedings by firing enough principal executive officers that it becomes practically impossible to know who

the relevant executive officers are for 25th Amendment purposes, or whether they can exercise authority under the amendment.

This possibility of Trump attempting to preempt a 25th Amendment action against him highlights that the amendment was intended, as Kalt notes, primarily "to provide continuity of power" when a president is truly disabled. It was not intended as a mechanism to remove from power a physically functioning president who simply lacks the capacity of character to perform his oath and who is wielding the powers and platform of the office in historically destructive ways. This and related concerns are why Kalt counsels hesitation against using the 25th Amendment for all but the most extreme situations that do not involve physical impairment.

We are now in that extreme situation. Trump has the hard power to engage in vengeful, destructive acts against the Cabinet and the country that could make things much, much worse. These are uncharted and very dangerous waters.

Topics: Continuity of Government, Executive Power

Tags: 25th Amendment, impeachment

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Donald Trump refuses to condemn white supremacists at presidential debate

theguardian.com/us-news/2020/sep/29/trump-proud-boys-debate-president-refuses-condemn-white-supremacists

David Smith, Lois Beckett, Maanvi Singh, Julia Carrie Wong September 30, 2020



Donald Trump declined to condemn white supremacists and violent rightwing groups during a contentious first presidential debate, instead urging a far-right group known for street brawling to "stand by" and arguing that "somebody's got to do something" about the left.

The president was asked repeatedly by the moderator, Chris Wallace, to condemn violence by white supremacists and rightwing groups, such as armed militias, as well as criticizing leftwing protesters.

Instead, Trump addressed the Proud Boys, a far-right group whose members have been sentenced to prison for attacking leftwing protesters in political street fights, and said: "Proud Boys, stand back and stand by! But I'll tell you what, somebody's got to do something about antifa and the left."

The Proud Boys, whose uniform is a black polo shirt, immediately celebrated the president's comment in posts on social media platform Telegram. One Proud Boys group added the phrase "Stand Back, Stand By" to their logo. Another post was a message to Trump: "Standing down and standing by sir."

Experts who study extremist groups said Trump's message was dangerous, and could encourage additional violence.

"A green light like 'stand back and standby' is catastrophic," Kathleen Belew, a historian of American white power movements, wrote on Twitter.

Trump "owes America an apology or an explanation. Now," Jonathan Greenblatt, the CEO of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which monitors American extremists groups, wrote on Twitter.

The ADL classifies the Proud Boys as an extremist group with a misogynistic, Islamophobic, transphobic and anti-immigrant ideology, and notes that some of its members endorse white supremacist ideas. The Southern Poverty Law Center classifies it as a hate group.

In 2019, a New York judge who sentenced two Proud Boys members to prison for assaulting leftwing protesters after an event in New York City said that cracking down on political violence was essential.

"I know enough about history to know what happened in Europe in the 30s when political street brawls were allowed to go ahead," the judge said at the Proud Boys' sentencing, the New York Post reported.

Antifa is a broad term for ideologically aligned anti-fascist individuals and small groups but it is not a distinct organization in any sense.

About 1,000 supporters of the Proud Boys, some armed, rallied in Portland, Oregon, last weekend.

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0:45
▲ 'Will you shut up, man?': Biden and Trump clash in first US presidential debate – video

Trump has repeatedly dog-whistled racist groups and expressed support for protesters seeking to keep Confederate monuments up on America's streets. In the wake of violent far-right and neo-Nazi protests in Charlottesville in 2017 – in which one counter-protester was killed – Trump said there "were very fine people, on both sides".

Many observers said that Trump's remarks prompted glee among Proud Boys' members. "Proud Boys in social media groups are going wild about the 'Stand back and stand by' comment. They are basically seeing it as acknowledgment and a call to arms," said the NBC reporter Ezra Kaplan.

Trump's refusal to condemn the group prompted outrage among progressives.

After the debate, Biden, who has said Trump's Charlottesville comments spurred him to run for the presidency, tweeted:

"Donald Trump is a white supremacist," wrote the New York representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez on Twitter. "People have been warning about this for a long time. They were ridiculed, called hyperbolic & radical –not bc they were wrong, but bc others couldn't accept that our country elected a supremacist as President.

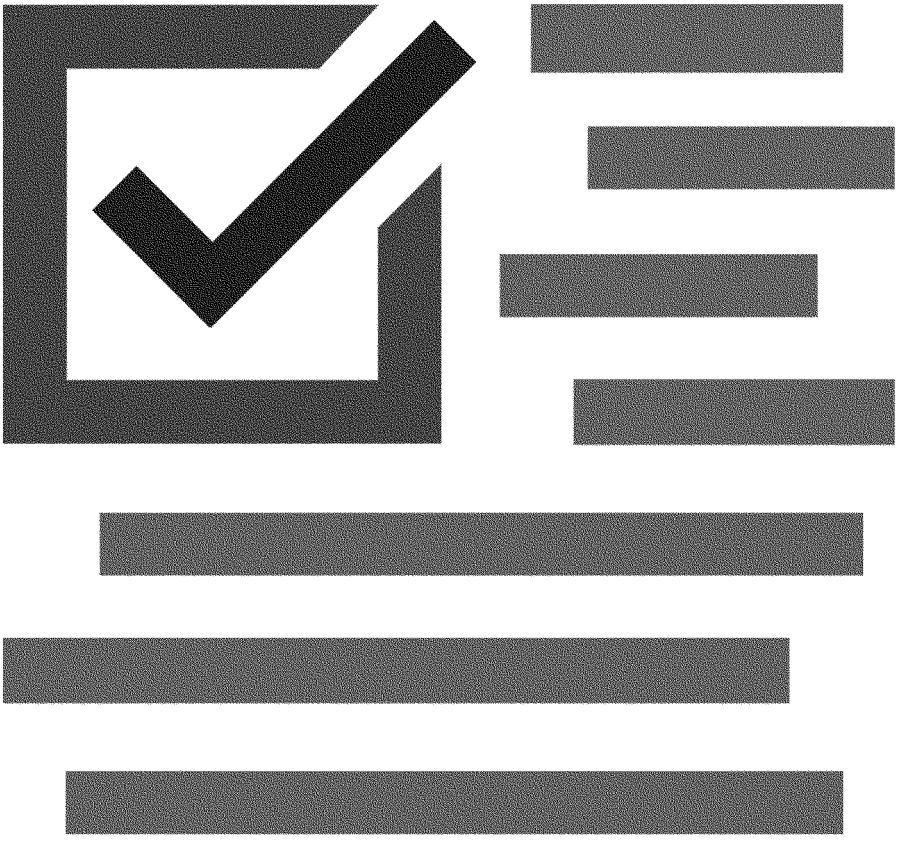
"This is fascism at our door."

Rashida Tlaib, the Democratic congresswoman from Michigan, echoed: "An important reminder that while racism is being debated, Donald Trump, a white supremacist, just told them to stand by. This again shows he is dangerous."

Biden's running mate, Kamala Harris, also condemned the president's refusal to disavow white supremacists. "The president of the United States, in the year of our Lord 2020, refuses to condemn white supremacists," she said.

And Belén Sisa, the former Latino press secretary for Bernie Sanders, said: "When someone shows you who they really are believe them."

Topics



Donald Trump

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The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

FBI report warned of 'war' at Capitol, contradicting claims there was no indication of looming violence

By **Devlin Barrett** and **Matt Zapotosky**

Jan. 12, 2021 at 6:40 p.m. EST

A day before rioters stormed Congress, an FBI office in Virginia issued an explicit warning that extremists were preparing to travel to Washington to commit violence and "war," according to an internal document reviewed by The Washington Post that contradicts a senior official's declaration the bureau had no intelligence indicating anyone at last week's demonstrations in support of President Trump planned to do harm.

A situational information report approved for release the day before the U.S. Capitol riot painted a dire portrait of dangerous plans, including individuals sharing a map of the complex's tunnels, and possible rally points for would-be conspirators to meet in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and South Carolina and head in groups to Washington.

"As of 5 January 2021, FBI Norfolk received information indicating calls for violence in response to 'unlawful lockdowns' to begin on 6 January 2021 in Washington, D.C.," the document says. "An online thread discussed specific calls for violence to include stating 'Be ready to fight. Congress needs to hear glass breaking, doors being kicked in, and blood from their BLM and Pantifa slave soldiers being spilled. Get violent. Stop calling this a march, or rally, or a protest. Go there ready for war. We get our President or we die. NOTHING else will achieve this goal."

BLM is probably a reference to the Black Lives Matter movement for racial justice. Pantifa is a derogatory term for antifa, a far-left anti-fascist movement whose adherents sometimes engage in violent clashes with right-wing extremists.

Yet even with that information in hand, the report's unidentified author expressed concern that the FBI might be encroaching on free-speech rights.

The warning is the starkest evidence yet of the sizable intelligence failure that preceded the mayhem, which claimed the lives of five people, although one law enforcement official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to avoid disciplinary action, said the failure was not one of intelligence but of acting on the intelligence.

At the FBI office in Norfolk, the report was written within 45 minutes of receiving the information, officials said, and shared with counterparts in Washington.

The head of the FBI's Washington Field Office, Steven D'Antuono, told reporters on Friday that the agency did not have intelligence suggesting the pro-Trump rally would be anything more than a lawful demonstration. During a news conference Tuesday, held after The Post's initial publication of this report, he said the alarming Jan. 5 intelligence document was shared "with all our law enforcement partners" through the joint terrorism task force, which includes the U.S. Capitol Police, the U.S. Park Police, D.C. police, and other federal and local agencies.

He suggested there was not a great deal for law enforcement to do with the information because the FBI at that time did not know who made the comments. "That was a thread on a message board that was not attributable to an individual person," D'Antuono said Tuesday.

D'Antuono did not say what, if anything, the FBI or other agencies did differently as a result of that information. Nor did he explain why he told reporters on Friday that there had been no such intelligence.

Steven Sund, who resigned as Capitol Police chief, said in an interview Tuesday that he never received nor was made aware of the FBI's field bulletin, insisting he and others would have taken the warning seriously had it been shared.

"I did not have that information, nor was that information taken into consideration in our security planning," Sund said.

Since the riot, agents and prosecutors have been intent on tracking down and arresting the most violent participants in the mob, in part because there is already significant online discussion of new potential clashes for Sunday and again on Jan. 20, when President-elect Joe Biden is set to take the oath of office.

Michael R. Sherwin, the acting U.S. attorney for D.C., said there would be a strike force of prosecutors looking to file charges of seditious conspiracy where the evidence merited it.

The Jan. 5 FBI report notes that the information represents the view of the FBI's Norfolk office, is not to be shared outside law enforcement circles, that it is not "finally evaluated intelligence," and that agencies receiving it "are requested not to take action based on this raw reporting without prior coordination with the FBI."

Multiple law enforcement officials have said privately in recent days that the level of violence exhibited at the Capitol has led to difficult discussions within the FBI and other agencies about race, terrorism and whether investigators failed to register the degree of danger because the overwhelming majority of the participants at the rally were White conservatives fiercely loyal to Trump.

"Individuals/Organizations named in this [situational information report] have been identified as participating in activities that are protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution," the document says. "Their inclusion here is not intended to associate the protected activity with criminality or a threat to national security, or to infer that such protected activity itself violates federal law.

"However," it continues, "based on known intelligence and/or specific historical observations, it is possible the protected activity could invite a violent reaction towards the subject individual or others in retaliation or with the goal of stopping the protected activity from occurring in the first instance. In the event no violent reaction occurs, FBI policy and federal law dictates that no further record be made of the protected activity."

The document notes that one online comment advised, "if Antifa or BLM get violent, leave them dead in the street," while another said they need "people on standby to provide supplies, including water and medical, to the front lines. The individual also discussed the need to evacuate noncombatants and wounded to medical care."

On Jan. 6, a large, angry crowd of people who had attended a rally nearby marched to the Capitol, smashing windows and breaking doors to get inside. One woman in the mob was shot and killed by Capitol Police; officials said three others in the crowd had medical emergencies and died. A Capitol Police officer died after suffering injuries.

The FBI said in a statement that its "standard practice is to not comment on specific intelligence products," but added that FBI field offices "routinely share information with their local law enforcement partners to assist in protecting the

that FBI field offices "routinely share information with their local law enforcement partners to assist in protecting the communities they serve."

For weeks leading up to the event, FBI officials discounted any suggestion that the activities of Trump supporters upset about the scheduled certification of Biden's election win could be a security threat on a scale with the racial-justice demonstrations that followed the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May.

While the nation's capital is one of the most heavily guarded cities on the planet, local and federal law enforcement agencies sought to take a low-key approach to last week's event, publicly and privately expressing concerns that they did not want to repeat last year's ugly clashes between protesters and police.

Some law enforcement officials took the view that protesters who support Trump are generally known for over-the-top rhetoric but not much violence, and therefore the event did not pose a particularly serious risk, according to people familiar with the security discussions leading up to Jan. 6.

Even so, there were warning signs, though none as stark as the one from the FBI's Norfolk office.

FBI agents had in the weeks before the Trump rally visited suspected far-right extremists, hoping to glean whether they had violent intentions, said a person familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the law enforcement activity. It was not immediately clear who was visited or if the FBI was specifically tracking anyone who would later be charged criminally. These visits were first reported Sunday by NBC News.

In addition, in the days leading up to the demonstrations, some Capitol Hill staffers were told by supervisors to not come in to work that day, if possible, because it seemed the danger level would be higher than many previous protests, according to a person familiar with the warning who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the matter. Capitol Police did not take the kind of extra precautions, such as frozen zones and hardened barriers, that are typically used for major events near the Capitol.

Federal agents are on high alert as the inauguration nears, with authorities bracing for possible violence not just in Washington but also nationwide, officials said.

The FBI recently issued a different memo saying that "armed protests" were being planned "at all 50 state capitols" and in D.C. in the run-up to the inauguration, according to an official familiar with the matter, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive law enforcement matter.

The memo — first reported by ABC News and later confirmed by The Post — is a raw intelligence product, compiling information gathered by the bureau and several other government agencies, the official familiar with the matter said. Some of it is unverified, and the threat probably will differ significantly from place to place, the official said.

But the information it highlights to law enforcement is nonetheless troubling — including that there was data suggesting people might storm government offices or stage an uprising were Trump to be removed from office, the official said.

In a statement, the FBI declined to comment specifically on the memo about state capitols but said: "Our efforts are focused on identifying, investigating, and disrupting individuals that are inciting violence and engaging in criminal activity. As we do in the normal course of business, we are gathering information to identify any potential threats and are sharing that information with our partners.

"The FBI respects the rights of individuals to peacefully exercise their First Amendment rights," it said. "Our focus is

"The FBI respects the rights of individuals to peacefully exercise their First Amendment rights," it said. "Our focus is not on peaceful protesters, but on those threatening their safety and the safety of other citizens with violence and destruction of property."

Carol D. Leonnig and Julie Tate contributed to this report.

Updated January 16, 2021

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The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

FBI probes possible connections between extremist groups at heart of Capitol violence

By **Devlin Barrett** and **Spencer S. Hsu**

Jan. 18, 2021 at 9:55 p.m. EST

The FBI investigation of the Capitol riot has begun to zero in on potential key figures in the chaos, including some self-styled militia members who in some videos and photos appear to be planning or urging further violence.

Though no one has been charged with leading or directing the violence, investigators are working to find out whether certain individuals helped coordinate aspects of the attack, before and during the chaos, or were merely opportunistic instigators.

In nearly two weeks since the assault, the Justice Department has charged more than 100 people — mostly individuals who revealed themselves as participating in the Jan. 6 riot through social media boasts. But the weekend arrests of people with alleged ties to extremist groups reflects the FBI's increasing attention to the more prepared, organized and determined groups among the larger mass of rioters.

One of those newly charged was Robert Gieswein, 24, of Woodland Park, Colo. Charging documents and videos indicate he may have links to the three extremist groups that have drawn the most attention from the FBI: the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers and Three Percenters. Some of the videos appear to include members who discussed storming the Capitol about an hour ahead of the riot.

In court papers, FBI agents say Gieswein — charged with assaulting police, civil disorder and obstruction of police and government — runs a private paramilitary training group and is affiliated with the Three Percenters. The FBI said in court filings that Gieswein was apparently recorded multiple times inside and outside the Capitol on Jan. 6, decked out in military garb with two distinctive markings that made it easier for investigators to trace his actions that day — a patch for his paramilitary group, the Woodland Wild Dogs, and a black pouch on his chest that said, "MY MOM THINKS I'M SPECIAL," evocative of the Proud Boys anthem, "Proud of Your Boy."

Someone who appears to match the description of Gieswein laid out in FBI arrest affidavits shows up on a live-streamed Proud Boys video from about 11:14 a.m. to 12:55 p.m. that day. About 30 minutes into the video, viewed by The Washington Post, one member in the group with people in blaze-orange hats, camouflage backpacks and military-style vests yells, "Let's take the f---ing Capitol!" Someone else then admonishes, "Let's not f---ing yell that."

The group in the video waits at the Capitol until 12:48 p.m. to link up with milling supporters of President Trump who have made their way to the west front of the Capitol after the president's speech at the Ellipse, the live stream shows. Once there, the Proud Boys group surges forward, toppling barricades and charging up the steps, with a Proud Boys narrator saying, "We're storming the Capitol!"

Then, about 2:13 p.m., according to FBI affidavits, Gieswein appears in a different video with a helmeted group breaking a window on the Senate side of the Capitol using a riot shield and a piece of lumber, one of the earliest breaches of the building.

Gieswein turned himself in to authorities Monday and was in custody in Colorado. Information about his attorney was not available. Efforts to reach Gieswein and relatives, including people associated with his addresses and inoperative Web domains he registered in 2019, such as *rockymountainoathkeepers.com* and *woodlandwilddogs.com*, were unsuccessful.

The charges filed against Gieswein on Saturday do not include accusations that he conspired with others to attack Congress. But investigators are still working to better understand his role and interactions with others on the day of the attack and in the run-up to the violence, according to people familiar with the case who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing.

Before the attack, Gieswein gave a media interview in which he echoed anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, the affidavit said, and said his message to Congress was "that they need to get the corrupt politicians out of office. Pelosi, the Clintons . . . every single one of them, Biden, Kamala."

On Monday, prosecutors unsealed charges against a Texas man associated with the Three Percenters who allegedly threatened to kill his children if they exposed him and a Pennsylvania 29-year-old accused of attacking police with a metal barricade.

Others also charged in recent days include a heavy-metal guitarist from Indiana and two self-styled militia members from Ohio — further signs that the FBI is ratcheting up its investigation of the role extremist organizations played in storming the building.

Jon Schaffer, who founded the band Iced Earth, turned himself in to FBI agents in Indianapolis on Sunday afternoon, officials said. On Jan. 6, Schaffer was photographed inside the Capitol, wearing a hat that said "Oath Keepers Lifetime Member."

Schaffer was charged with six crimes, including engaging in an act of physical violence. Authorities said Schaffer was among the rioters who targeted Capitol Police with bear spray. At a pro-Trump march in November attended by Oath Keepers, the FBI said, Schaffer said: "We're not going to merge into some globalist, communist system. It will not happen. There will be a lot of bloodshed if it comes down to that, trust me."

Also arrested Sunday were Donovan Crowl, 50, a former Marine interviewed by the New Yorker, and Army veteran Jessica Watkins, 38. A bartender, Watkins recently told the Ohio Capital Journal that she formed the "Ohio State Regular Militia" in 2019 — a unit of the Oath Keepers, the FBI said — and that the group has appeared at a dozen rallies to "protect people."

The FBI said Watkins posted to Parler a photograph of herself in uniform on Jan. 6, writing: "Me before forcing entry into the Capitol Building. #stopthesteal #stormthecapitol #oathkeepers #ohiomilitia."

Watkins and Crowl were among about 10 people recorded at the Capitol wearing combat helmets, ballistic goggles, tactical vests and Oath Keepers patches who were shown to "move in an organized and practiced fashion and force

their way to the front of the crowd" outside the Capitol, FBI affidavits said.

Attorneys for Crowl, Watkins and Schaffer could not immediately be identified.

The Oath Keepers, the Three Percenters and the Proud Boys, a male-chauvinist group with ties to white nationalism, have drawn particular attention from FBI agents investigating the attack on Congress as they work to determine whether those groups organized or directed the violence to block certification of President-elect Joe Biden's election victory. Officials have said the Proud Boys in particular are an important focus of the FBI investigation.

"All these extremist groups are being looked at in terms of their participation at the Capitol," Michael Sherwin, acting U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, said Friday.

Oath Keepers patches and logos were prominently worn by a number of those in the mob that day. It is one of the largest self-described militia groups in the United States, claiming tens of thousands of members who assert the right to defy what they deem "illegal" government orders.

The Oath Keepers gained a measure of notoriety last summer when members showed up at Black Lives Matter protests wearing military gear and carrying weapons as a kind of self-declared vigilante force to prevent vandalism. Before that, they appeared at the 2014 standoff at the Bundy ranch in Nevada and the protests in Ferguson, Mo.

A related group, the Three Percenters, formed in 2008 and is named after the bogus claim that only 3 percent of the population fought against the British in the American Revolution. The self-described militia group espouses right-wing libertarian ideals and has embraced Trump. The group also has provided security services for various right-wing protests and movements, the FBI said.

Overall, many of those charged by the Justice Department have been what one senior law enforcement official characterized as "low-hanging fruit" — people who revealed themselves as participating in the riot on Jan. 6.

Federal investigators are now accelerating efforts to determine whether the assault was planned and led by groups of people — rather than an impulsive outburst of violence — particularly because some of the men shown on video laying siege to the building were equipped with handheld radios and headsets and at times appeared to work in unison on particular objectives, investigators said.

"There are breadcrumbs of organization in terms of what maybe was taking place outside the Capitol . . . with perhaps some type of communication with core groups of people ingressing into the Capitol," Sherwin said, but he cautioned it could be weeks or months before the FBI settles on an answer "to find out the actual motivations of some of those groups."

Even before the riot, the Oath Keepers had garnered attention and alarmed law enforcement officials. Stewart Rhodes, a former Army paratrooper who founded the group in 2009, threatened ahead of November's election to deploy members to polling places, preemptively accusing Democrats of voter fraud on Alex Jones's online show "Infowars."

Members also demonstrated in Washington after the election in support of Trump. Rhodes, who has predicted the nation will descend into civil war, said allies would not recognize Biden's victory as legitimate, adding in an interview with news outlet the Independent, "We'll end up nullifying and resisting."

Before the riot, law enforcement agencies were also increasingly concerned about the Proud Boys. The group's chairman, Enrique Tarrio, had planned to attend Trump's Jan. 6 rally but was arrested when he arrived in D.C. and charged with misdemeanor destruction of property in connection with the burning of a Black Lives Matter banner taken from a Black church during an earlier protest in Washington. He is also accused of felony possession of two extended gun magazines.

Tarrio told The Post last week that his group did not organize the Capitol siege.

"If they think we were organizing going into the Capitol, they're going to be sadly mistaken," he said. "Our plan was to stay together as a group and just enjoy the day. We weren't going to do a night march, anything like that. That's it as far as our day."

In the Proud Boys' Jan. 6 live-stream video, marchers refer to Tarrio and some address him via the stream. One leader taunts police by bullhorn, shouting before the riot, "You took our boy in, and you let our stabber go," apparently referring to Tarrio's arrest and a man allegedly involved in stabbing several Proud Boys in a December march on D.C.

U.S. authorities on Friday arrested Dominic Pezzola, 43, of Rochester, N.Y., a former Marine and Proud Boys member known as"Spaz" or Spazzo" who is allegedly visible helping Gieswein climb through the riot-shield-shattered Capitol window and confronting police with him inside the building. In court papers, the FBI cited a witness who told them that the group Pezzola was with would have killed "anyone they got their hands on," including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Vice President Pence.

Since the attack, Proud Boys leaders have urged members to pull out of pro-Trump protests planned around Biden's inauguration Wednesday.

Tarrio said he is actively discouraging members from attending planned armed marches. The Proud Boys, he said, are on a "rally freeze and will not be organizing any events for the next month or so."

Jennifer Jenkins, Dalton Bennett and Julie Tate contributed to this report.

Updated January 17, 2021

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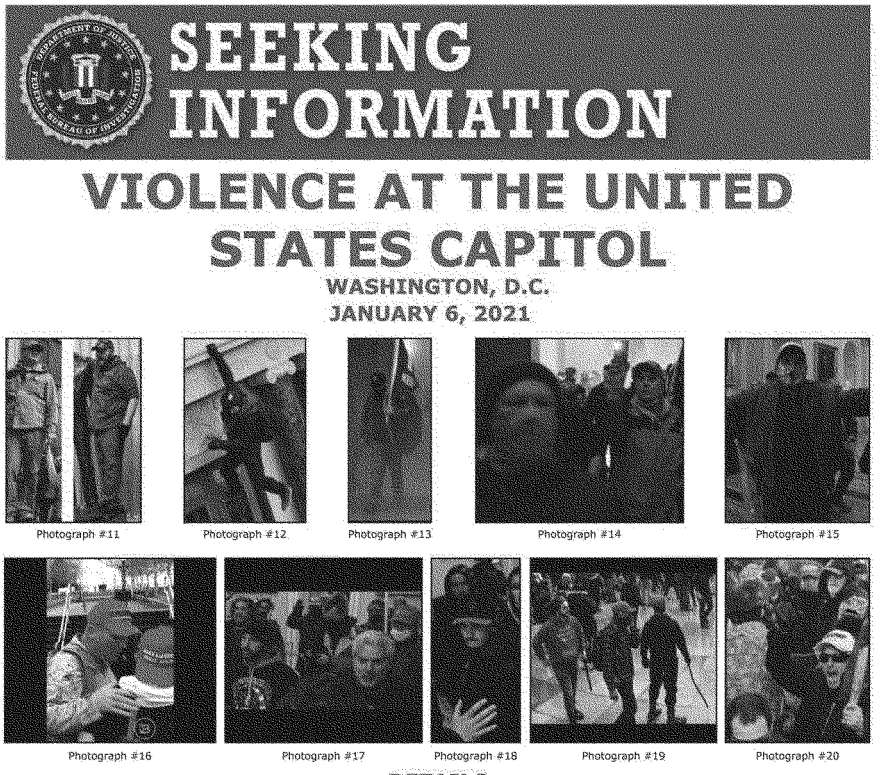
FBI focuses on whether some Capitol rioters intended to harm lawmakers or take hostages

washingtonpost.com/national-security/capitol-riot-fbi-hostages/2021/01/08/df99ae5a-5202-11eb-83e3-322644d82356_story.html

By Devlin Barrett, Spencer S. Hsu and Matt Zapotosky January 9, 2021



FBI agents are trying to determine whether some who stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday intended to do more than cause havoc and disrupt the certification of President-elect Joe Biden's victory, and they are sifting through evidence to see whether anyone wanted to kill or capture lawmakers or their staffers, according to people familiar with the investigation.

Dozens have been arrested, and Friday, officials announced charges against an Arkansas man photographed in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office chair with a foot on a desk. But investigators also are working to determine the motivations and larger goals, if any, of those who had weapons or other gear suggesting they planned to do physical harm.

Some rioters, for instance, were photographed carrying zip ties, a plastic version of handcuffs, and one man was arrested allegedly carrying a pistol on the Capitol grounds.

"We're not looking at this as a grand conspiracy, but we are interested in learning what people would do with things like zip ties," said a law enforcement official, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the investigation.

No photos or videos that have surfaced so far suggest any of the individuals with zip ties tried to take hostages. One possibility being pursued by investigators is that some who burst into the building may be current or former law enforcement officers, or current and former military personnel, people familiar with the investigation said.

Some who participated in the larger pro-Trump protest this week do work in law enforcement.

Chris West, the sheriff of Canadian County in Oklahoma, for example, held a news conference Friday to dispute that he was the person pictured on social media who claimed he was inside the Capitol, according to a Fox affiliate there. West told reporters that though he did come to rally in D.C. as an "individual" and Trump supporter, he never set foot in the Capitol building and thought he was walking from Liberty Square in the direction of the Capitol when the violence began.

A sheriff in Bexar County, Tex., meanwhile, told reporters that one of his lieutenants — Roxanne Mathai — was under investigation after her Facebook posts appeared to show she was at the Capitol, according to a local ABC station. Mathai has not been charged with any wrongdoing.

Many of the initial charges have been for unlawful entry, but authorities also found suspected pipe bombs outside the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee, and they arrested the owner of a truck they said was spotted nearby with 11 molotov cocktails inside. The FBI is still searching for the person who left the suspected pipe bombs.

Adding to the investigation's urgency, Twitter on Friday noted that plans for future armed protests have begun circulating online, including a proposed second attack on the U.S. Capitol and assaults on state government buildings Jan. 17. Officials cautioned that there may be a variety of motives among those who broke into Congress, and they said that a key part of their investigation is determining whether any individuals or groups had planned in advance or were coordinating in the moment to commit violence against individual politicians. Others may simply have been caught up in the moment and committed rash, unplanned crimes, officials said.

Fresh in investigators' minds is the group of men charged last year in Michigan — self-styled militia members — who are accused of plotting to kidnap that state's governor and allegedly discussed storming the state Capitol and taking lawmakers hostage. That case, however, was investigated surreptitiously for months during the planning stages, and the men were arrested before they carried out any abduction or attack. They have pleaded not guilty and are awaiting trial. Now, the FBI is tasked with trying to discern the motives of people who have already stormed the halls of Congress.

Justice Department and FBI officials insisted Friday that they are throwing every available resource at the case, which involves hundreds of potential suspects, though the initial focus is on a smaller number of individuals who burst into the seat of the national legislature, interrupting a joint session of Congress, leaving lawmakers and staffers cowering in fear.

The attack on Congress, in which Capitol police were quickly overrun, has shaken officials throughout the federal government, and the FBI has agents in all 56 field offices nationwide pursuing leads.

"Just because you've left the D.C. region, you can still expect a knock on the door if we find out you were part of criminal activity in the Capitol," said Steven M. D'Antuono, head of the FBI's Washington Field Office.

Former law enforcement officials said investigators would spend the coming days and weeks combing through social media, searching the phones and email accounts of suspects and taking other steps to determine whether the attack was coordinated. There are numerous social media posts indicating that people had talked in advance about storming the building.

"This is why you do investigations before you charge anybody," said Chuck Rosenberg, a former U.S. attorney and FBI official. "Did some number of them, maybe not all, did some number of them have an agreement that the law forbids?"

Rosenberg said it will take time for investigators to determine whether there were broader conspiracies. "Even though people act in concert, it doesn't necessarily mean they conspired," he said. "You could have 300 people with 100 separate conspiratorial agreements of three people each, or you could have a single conspiracy with 300."

One person was fatally shot by Capitol police during the violence. Three others suffered medical problems that day and died. And overnight Thursday into Friday, a Capitol police officer who collapsed shortly after confronting the invading crowd died of unspecified injuries.

Acting attorney general Jeffrey A. Rosen extended condolences to the Capitol Police and the family of Officer Brian D. Sicknick, who died of injuries sustained during the rioting, saying, "The Department of Justice will spare no resources in investigating and holding accountable those responsible."

David Laufman, a former federal prosecutor who was a senior Justice Department official during the 9/11 terrorist attacks, said Wednesday's mayhem was uniquely scarring for the country.

"This is the greatest threat to our national security since Sept. 11, and a more dangerous, insidious threat, because unlike the attack on Sept. 11, our very democracy is now at stake," Laufman said. "And there can be no higher priority for the Department of Justice and the FBI than to surge investigative efforts to hold accountable everyone who was responsible for the attack on the U.S. Capitol, including any individuals who incited that attack."

Laufman said that it was "fair to say that the intentions of every individual among the horde that invaded the Capitol like Visigoths were not uniform."

"But it does appear, based on what's in the public record now, that some held malignant intention to do harm to elected representatives, to the physical embodiment of our democracy, to derail the formalization of President-elect Biden's election," he said. "And it will take investigative work to parse out who was responsible for what and who held what intentions."

Officials announced Friday that a recently elected state lawmaker from West Virginia, Derrick Evans, was charged with unlawfully entering restricted grounds after allegedly live-streaming a video of himself on his Facebook page.

"Bring the tear gas. We don't care," Evans is heard yelling. "We're taking this country back, whether you like it or not. Today's a test run. We're taking this country back."

A lawyer for Evans, John H. Bryan, has maintained that Evans is innocent, that he was not part of the violent mob that damaged the Capitol Building and that he had been exercising his First Amendment rights.

Prosecutors also announced that Lonnie Leroy Coffman, 70, of Falkville, Ala., was charged Thursday on one federal and one local count of possessing an unregistered or unlicensed firearm, and was the registered owner of a red GMC pickup truck with Alabama plates parked near the Capitol in which officers allegedly found 11 molotov cocktails and an M4 carbine assault rifle.

Prosecutor Kenneth C. Kohl said police also found Coffman carrying two handguns. Federal agents discovered the truck while investigating suspected pipe bombs near the Republican National Committee headquarters on Capitol Hill and its Democratic counterpart, Kohl said.

Kohl said that though the truck was investigated because of the suspected or "perceived pipe bombs," Coffman was not charged in connection with those possible devices but with allegedly possessing the other weapons and destructive devices in his truck or on his person.

At an initial court appearance Thursday in Washington, Coffman did not enter a plea and was ordered held pending a hearing next week. In response to a U.S. magistrate's questions over whether he wanted a court-appointed attorney, Coffman said he had earned a high school equivalency degree in the U.S. military after dropping out in the eighth grade to work on a farm.

The developments came as investigators described a sprawling inquiry that could take months. D.C. police said they have received about 17,000 tips from the public after posting images of people of interest in the rioting. The FBI also has been inundated with leads after posting more than 40 photographs asking for assistance identifying people.

But the Justice Department also appeared to step back from remarks Thursday by Michael R. Sherwin, the acting U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, who said President Trump's own remarks before Wednesday's riot at the U.S. Capitol could be investigated.

Asked about incendiary statements made by the president and other speakers at Trump's rally shortly before a mob of his supporters breached security at the Capitol and wreaked havoc inside, Sherwin said: "Yes, we are looking at all actors here, not only the people that went into the building, but ... were there others that maybe assisted or facilitated or played some ancillary role in this. We will look at every actor and all criminal charges."

On Friday, asked about the possibility that Trump or other onstage speakers could face charges of inciting violence, Kohl clarified, "We don't expect any charges of that nature."

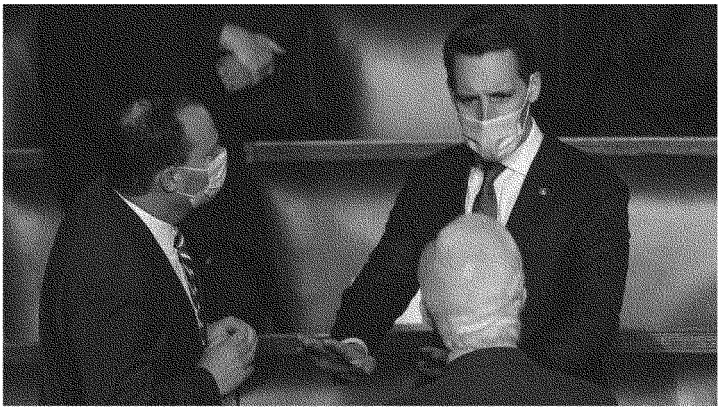
Afterward, Justice Department spokesman Marc Raimondi elaborated, "Our focus is on the events at the Capitol. As of now, we have not charged anyone with incitement or insurrection. This is an extremely complex and ongoing investigation, and we will continue to follow the facts and the law."

Correction: A previous version of this story stated incorrectly that the Arkansas man photographed Wednesday in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office was seated at her desk. He was photograhed while sitting at a workstation used by one of her staff members.

How President Trump misdialed Utah Sen. Mike Lee while the Capitol was under siege

deseret.com/utah/2021/1/7/22218897/donald-trump-mike-lee-misdial-capitol-siege-congress-electoral-insurrection-moore-curtis-stewart

Dennis Romboy January 7, 2021



Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, left, and Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, talk to Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., right, as a joint session of the House and Senate convenes to count the electoral votes cast in November's election, at the Capitol in Washington on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021. Hawley was among eight senators who voted to sustain one or both objections to the election results in Arizona and Pennsylvania.
Andrew Harnik, Associated Press

Politics

Utah congressmen recount the chaos in the Capitol

Share How President Trump misdialed Utah Sen. Mike Lee while the Capitol was under siege

With a mob of election protesters laying siege to the U.S. Capitol, Sen. Mike Lee had just ended a prayer with some of his colleagues in the Senate chamber when his cellphone rang.

Caller ID showed the call originated from the White House. Lee thought it might be national security adviser Robert O'Brien, with whom he'd been playing phone tag on an unrelated issue. It wasn't O'Brien. It was President Donald Trump.

"How's it going, Tommy?" the president asked.

Taken a little aback, Lee said this isn't Tommy.

"Well, who is this? Trump asked. "It's Mike Lee," the senator replied. "Oh, hi Mike. I called Tommy."

Lee told the Deseret News he realized Trump was trying to call Sen. Tommy Tuberville, the newly elected Republican from Alabama and former Auburn University football coach. Lee walked his phone over to Tuberville who was talking to some colleagues.

"Hey, Tommy, I hate to interrupt but the president wants to speak with you," Lee said.

Tuberville and Trump talked for about five to 10 minutes, Lee said, adding that he stood nearby because he didn't want to lose his cellphone in the commotion. The two were still talking when panicked police ordered the Capitol to be evacuated because people had breached security.

As police were getting anxious for senators to leave, Lee walked over to retrieve his phone.

"I don't want to interrupt your call with the president, but we're being evacuated and I need my phone," he said.

Tuberville said, "OK, Mr. President. I gotta go."

Lee said when he later asked Tuberville about the conversation, he got the impression that Trump didn't know about the chaos going on in the Senate chamber.

The bizarre scene is among the surreal moments members of Congress and Utah's delegation experienced Wednesday when pro-Trump rioters took over the Capitol during the counting of electoral votes for president.

Meantime in Utah, the state dispatched Utah Highway Patrol troopers to the Utah homes of members of Congress to watch over their families.

Rep. Chris Stewart, R-Utah, was evacuated from his office in the Cannon Building earlier in the day due to a bomb threat, and was moved to the Capitol and later placed on lockdown.

"We were surrounded by angry crowds trying to break into the Capitol building," he said.



Trump supporters try to break through a police barrier, Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, at the Capitol in Washington.
Julio Cortez, Associated Press

Related

Photos from inside the Capitol show the aftermath of the Jan. 6 riot

Capitol Police moved him and others from room to room to keep them safe.

"The crowd broke through the barricades and entered the building. They filled the hallways and began chanting and tussling with police officers. It was a mess," he said.

Rep. John Curtis, R-Utah, was in his office in the Rayburn Building waiting to vote on the Arizona objection and watching the protesters move up the Capitol steps on C-Span and cable news. He said it was alarming to see people breach the doors because that's a line that nobody gets to cross.

"It then reached even a further fever pitch when they got into the chambers," he told the Deseret News.

Related

Republicans react to results and resign over riot on Capitol grounds

Mitt Romney says President Trump's 'injured pride' incited Capitol 'insurrection'

Curtis and his staff went into lockdown in his office.

He considers the House chamber a sacred space, and watching rioters on the floor felt like having his home burglarized.

"You just feel violated. This our home. This is the people's home and it is being violated," Curtis said.

Curtis characterized it as very emotional for him, his staff and his colleagues.

"That feeling of we have lost the Capitol to a mob really is surreal, and hard to get your arms around what that really means. I think in reflection, it's a very, very serious thing. Not only is it serious, it's embarrassing. It's embarrassing around the world. It's embarrassing that the seat of democracy is under siege," he said.

> My staff and I are safe— thank you to @CapitolPolice for working tirelessly.
>
> It's totally inappropriate what's happening here at the Capitol. This is not who we are, we're better than this. My plea is that we use all our influence to tone this down & return to reasonable debate. pic.twitter.com/I2X3e7nGt0
>
> — Rep. John Curtis (@RepJohnCurtis) January 6, 2021

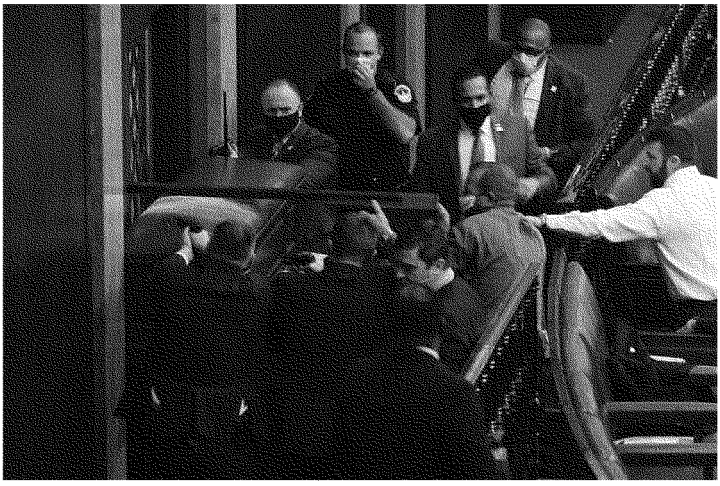
Rep. Blake Moore, R-Utah, said he could see the crowd rising outside the Capitol through a House chamber window.

"It starts to get a little bit more loud and you start hearing, I guess they were pipe bombs, but you hear things going off. It seems like, 'OK, it's getting a little bit closer,'" he said Thursday on KSL Newsradio's "Dave and Dujanovic."

As he listened to the debate, he saw security lock down the double doors to the chamber. He said he received text messages from his staff that there had been a breach. Moore said some of his colleagues barricaded the door.

"I think the most eerie time was when you started hearing banging on the House chamber doors. They were literally just right outside and you could hear them banging on it. That's when they told us to get our gas masks," he said.

At that point, police evacuated the chamber.



U.S. Capitol Police with guns drawn stand near a barricaded door as protesters try to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington. *Andrew Harnik, Associated Press*

Moore said he saw images of protesters on Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's seat while he was still in the House.

"We thought if they can get there, they can get in here, so we all rushed out," he said. "We just had to barricade ourselves into each of the offices."

Lee said he heard yelling and some of his colleagues heard shots fired outside the Senate chamber. Police ordered them to stay at their desks.

"People were a little bit scared, but everybody had their game-day face on," he recalled.

Lee said the 100 senators were eventually escorted through tunnels to Room 216 in the Hart Building, the largest Senate hearing room. He saw a parliamentarian carrying boxes of electoral votes submitted by the states.

Related

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi says Trump should be removed immediately

"We had a lot of conversations in there about what we should do," he said.

Senators considered going into session in the hearing room to finish the electoral vote tally, which they learned was allowed under Senate rules. But Senate majority and minority leadership felt it was best to wait until they could get into the chamber.

Lee said there also was pressure put on senators who had objected or who had planned to object to states' electoral votes to end the counting as quickly as possible. Some of them changed their minds when the session resumed.

Congress eventually confirmed President-elect Joe Biden as the next president with 306 electoral votes to 232 for Trump. A dozen GOP senators and more than 100 House Republicans had planned to object to the votes in as many as six swing states that Trump lost.



Vice President Mike Pence and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., stand after to reading the final certification of Electoral College votes cast in November's presidential election during a joint session of Congress after working through the night, at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, Jan. 7, 2021.
J. Scott Applewhite, Associated Press

In the end, Republicans objected to the votes from Arizona and Pennsylvania, both of which failed.

Stewart and Rep. Burgess Owens, R-Utah, had indicated they would not vote to certify the election. They both voted against the Arizona objection and for the Pennsylvania objection. The other four members of Utah's all-Republican delegation voted against both objections.

Stewart said he voted that way because the facts "supported that conclusion" in Pennsylvania but said there was not enough evidence in Arizona.

"What happened yesterday does not in any way change the facts that happened on Election Day or time surrounding that election," he said on KSL Newsradio's "Live Mic." "My point was answering these questions, giving people assurance that our elections are fair and that they are represented."

The Alliance for a Better Utah called for Stewart and Owens to resign Thursday because of their vote on Pennsylvania.

"Reps. Owens and Stewart have chosen to fight against democracy for the sake of their own political ambition, and they must accept the consequences of their actions," said Chase Thomas, Better Utah executive director, "They can no longer be trusted to hold the sacred offices to which they were elected."

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Timeline: How One Of The Darkest Days In American History Unfolded

January 7, 2021 · 1:47 PM ET

DOMENICO MONTANARO



The U.S. Supreme Court is seen through a broken window at an entrance of the U.S. Capitol Wednesday.
Alex Wong/Getty Images

Wednesday will go down as one of the darkest days in American history.

It was all egged on by a sitting president, who has been unable to accept losing his bid for reelection and who persuaded millions of his followers to buy into baseless, debunked and disproved conspiracy theories.

The result: A mob violently storming and occupying the U.S. Capitol for hours, while staffers and lawmakers were evacuated or hid in fear. The vice president was also rushed from the floor of the Senate and taken to a secure location after criticisms were tweeted from his boss.

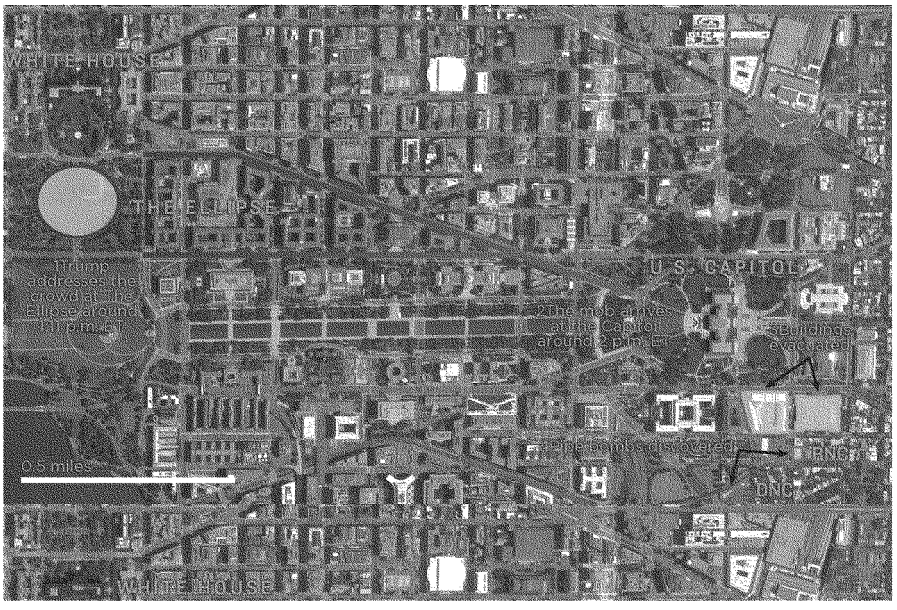
Here's a timeline of how things unfolded:

1 p.m. ET A joint session of Congress begins to tally the Electoral College votes, with Vice President Pence presiding. As it begins, Pence releases a letter to Congress declaring that he does not have unilateral authority to overturn the election results.

1:11 p.m. President Trump's speech to supporters on the Ellipse outside the White House ends. During the roughly hourlong speech, Trump urges his followers to march to the Capitol and says at one point, "You will never take back our country with weakness." Trump says he will be there with them but never joins the crowd.

Where The Events Took Place

Supporters of President Trump marched from his speech near the White House to the Capitol, where rioters then broke into the building.



1:13 p.m. Arizona Rep. Paul Gosar files the first objection to state Electoral College certification, from his home state. Democrat Joe Biden won the state by 10,457 votes. The objection needs to be joined by a U.S. senator, which it is. The objection could then be debated for up to two hours. Republican House members and senators threaten to do this for up to half a dozen states. The tactic amounts to not more than a delay, however, as the end result will be President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris being declared the winners — again.

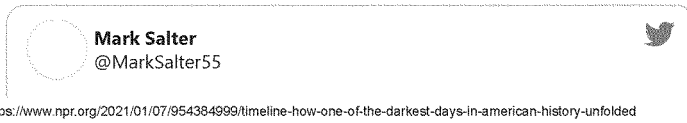
2:07 p.m. The mob of Trump supporters breach the steps on the east side of the Capitol.

2:16 p.m. The first scenes of the rioters inside the building.



2:24 p.m. Trump tweets that Vice President "Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done." During Trump's speech earlier on the Ellipse, he also targeted Pence, saying, "We're going to have to fight much harder and Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us. If he doesn't, that will be a sad day for our country because you're sworn to uphold our Constitution."

2:33 p.m. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, one of the senators who said he would sign on to objections of accepting state certification, sends out a fundraising email. He asks people to "stand with" him in his fight to "reject electors." An aide to Cruz then told Politico that the email was an automated message and that he was "dismayed" by what was happening. "He would not send this out," the aide said.





2:38 p.m. For the first time, Trump tells his supporters to be "peaceful." "Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement," he tweets. "They are truly on the side of our Country. Stay peaceful!"

2:42 p.m. The House and Senate go into lockdown.

3 p.m. Gunshots heard. Capitol Police shot a woman, who later died. A total of four people in total died related to the events.

3:08 p.m. House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., confirms reports of "shots fired" on Fox News and says he called the president, urging him to call for calm.

3:13 p.m. Trump puts out another tweet "asking for everyone at the U.S. Capitol to remain peaceful. No violence! Remember, WE are the Party of Law & Order... ."

3:36 p.m. The White House press secretary says on Twitter that the National Guard was on its way at Trump's direction. A Defense Department official later said the guard was authorized "days ago," but it turns out the guard had only been authorized to work with police at intersections and at Metro stations. Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser said she asked for more help from the guard as tensions rose, but the White House was late in responding.

3:48 p.m. Reports of pipe bombs being discovered. Metropolitan Police later confirm that they were found at the headquarters of both the Republican and Democratic national committees and destroyed by law enforcement.

4:06 p.m. President-elect Biden speaks, calls what happened "an unprecedented assault" on democracy and labels it an "insurrection." "At their best," Biden said, "the words of a president can inspire. At their worst, they can incite." He urges Trump to "step up," go on national television and "end this siege."

4:16 p.m. Democrat Jon Ossoff is declared the winner of the last remaining Georgia Senate race, effectively giving control of the U.S. Senate to Democrats once Ossoff's win is certified and the new Georgia senators and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, who will act as a tiebreaker, are sworn in.



Election 2020
News from The Associated Press, the definitive source for independent journalism from every corner of the globe.
apnews.com

4:18 PM · Jan 6, 2021

31.7K 12.1K people are Tweeting about this

4:17 p.m. Trump tweets a video downplaying the events of day and sympathizing with his followers, saying, "I know your pain. I know your hurt." He added, "But you have to go home now. We have to have peace. We have to have law and order. We don't want anybody hurt."



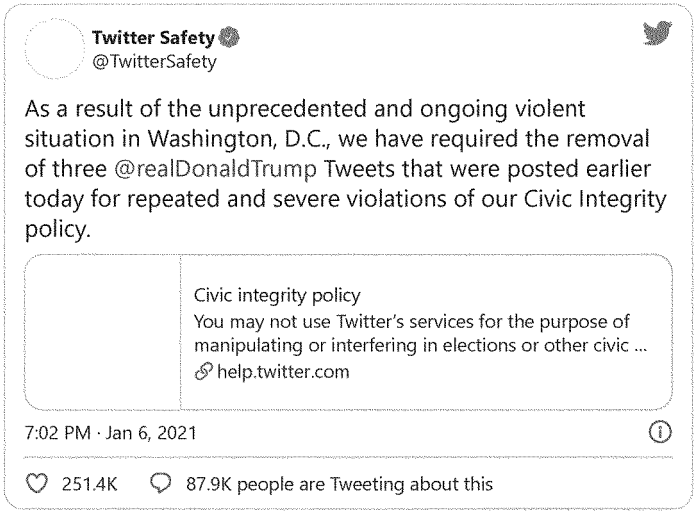
PROTESTS HALT CONGRESS' ELECTORAL COUNT: LIVE UPDATES
Trump Downplays Insurrection But Tells Supporters To 'Go Home'

6:01 p.m. Trump sends another message to his supporters, this time in tweet form. "These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long," he says. He then tells them to "Go home with love & in peace. Remember this day forever!"

Twitter earlier disallowed replies, likes or retweets of the video and then did the same with the written tweet.

7:02 p.m. Twitter locks President Trump's account for 12 hours, calling for the deletion of three tweets — the video, follow-up tweet and the one criticizing Pence at 2:24 p.m. It threatens to remove him from the platform altogether if "future violations" occur. On Thursday, Facebook announced that it was banning Trump

"indefinitely and for at least the next two weeks until the peaceful transition of power is complete."



8 p.m. In a show of defiance, Congress returns to the Capitol complete the opening and counting of electors.

8:10 p.m. Pence speaks on Senate floor: "To those who wreaked havoc today: You did not win. Violence never wins. Freedom wins, and this is still the people's house. As we reconvene, the world will again witness the resilience of our democracy."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell calls the rioters "thugs" and notes, "They tried to disrupt our democracy. They failed." On the House floor, Speaker Nancy Pelosi declared, "Our purpose will be accomplished."

8:48 p.m. Kelly Loeffler, the Georgia senator who lost the night before to Democrat Raphael Warnock, drops her objection to the certification of electors. She's one of multiple Republican senators who previously said they would object to accepting state certifications and but then reversed course.

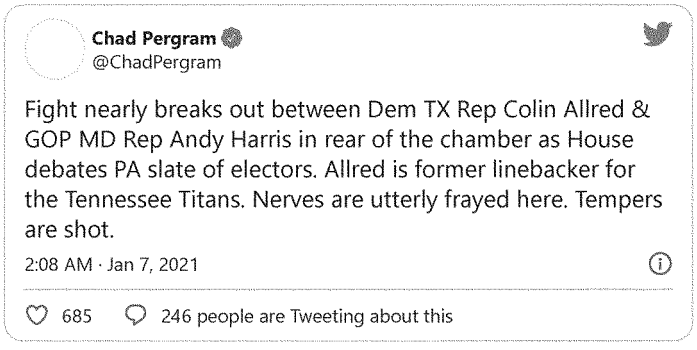
10:14 p.m. Senate rejects objection to Arizona's electors and accepts them, 93-6.

11:13 p.m. House rejects Arizona objection as well.

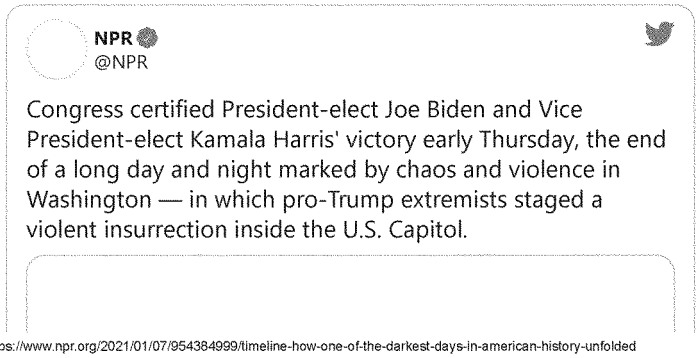
12:14 a.m. Republican Scott Perry of Pennsylvania objects to Pennsylvania's certification; it is sustained by Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley.

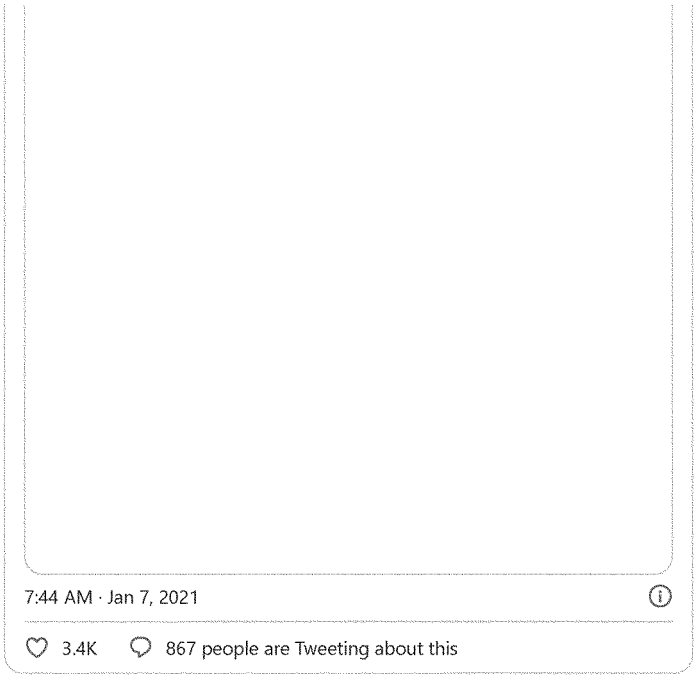
12:41 a.m. The Senate, skipping the allotted debate, rejects objection to Pennsylvania slate of electors, 92-7.

3:11 a.m. House rejects objection to Pennsylvania certification, as well, 282-138. But that was not before fisticuffs reportedly nearly break out between members an hour earlier.

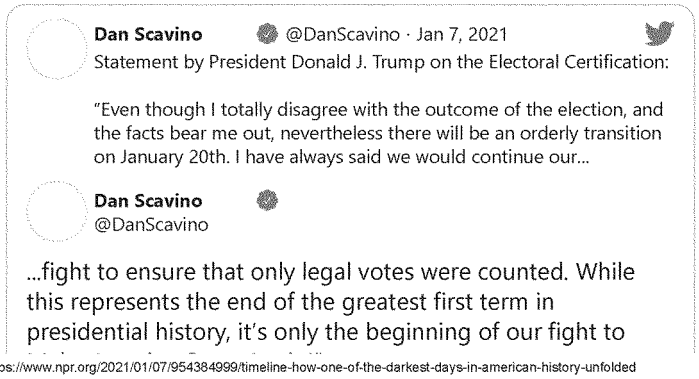


3:45 a.m. Pence affirms Biden-Harris won: "Joseph R. Biden Jr. of the state of Delaware has received for President of the United States, 306 votes. Donald J. Trump of the state of Florida has received 232 votes."





3:49 a.m. Trump puts out a statement on Twitter via his social media manager, pledging an "orderly transition" on Jan. 20, but continues to sow doubt about the election's accuracy, saying he will continue his "fight to ensure that only legal votes were counted."



Make America Great Again!"

3:49 AM · Jan 7, 2021 from Washington, DC

81.2K 30K people are Tweeting about this

Correction

Jan. 7, 2021

A previous version of this story attributed one of President Trump's quotes to the wrong medium. He did not say, "These are the things and events that happen ... Remember this day forever " in the video he released. He made that statement in a subsequent tweet that has now been removed.

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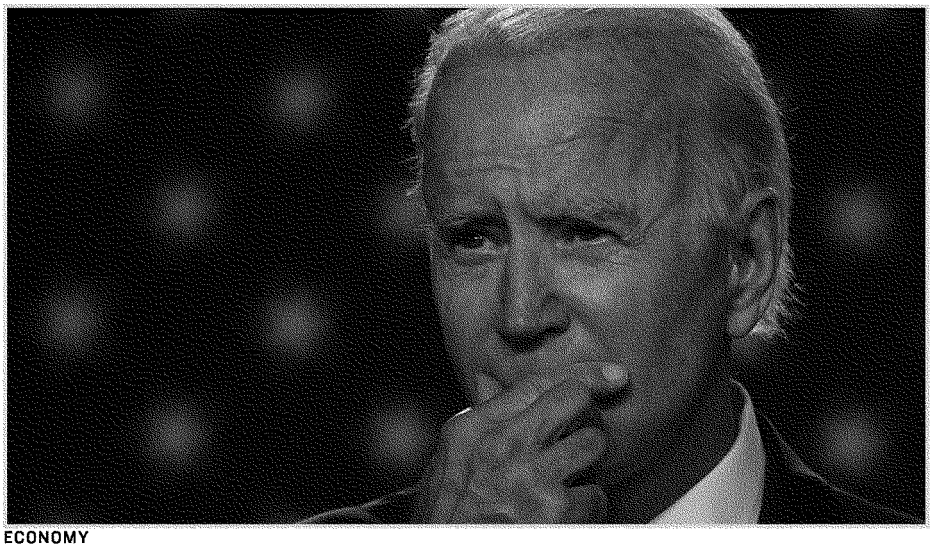

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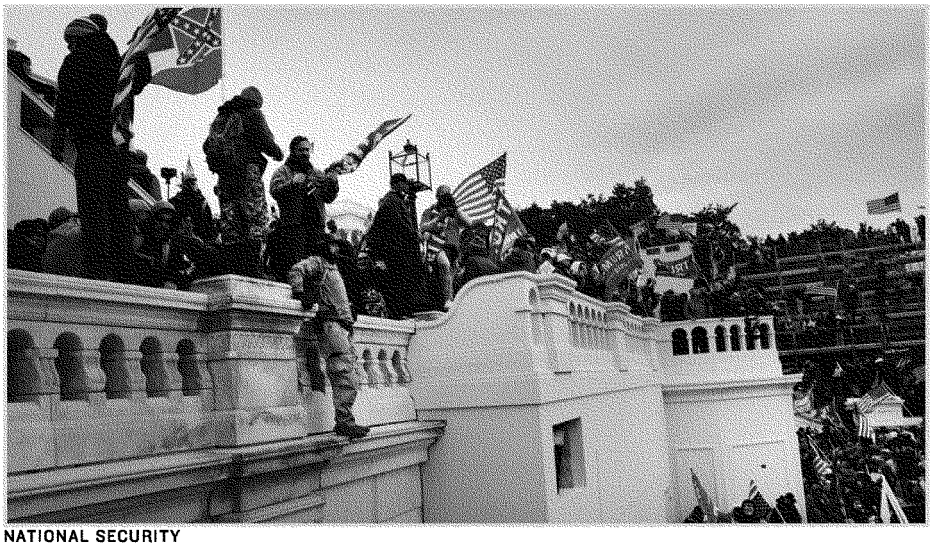

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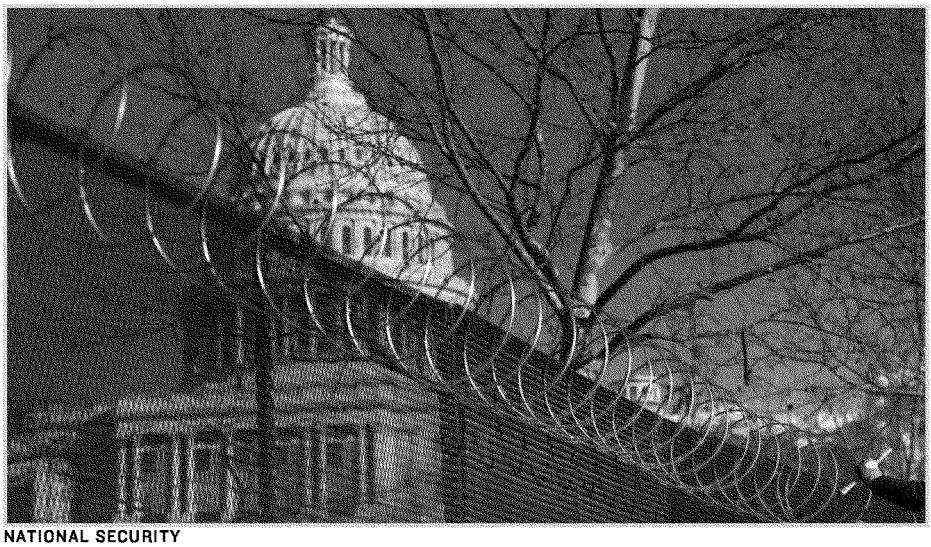

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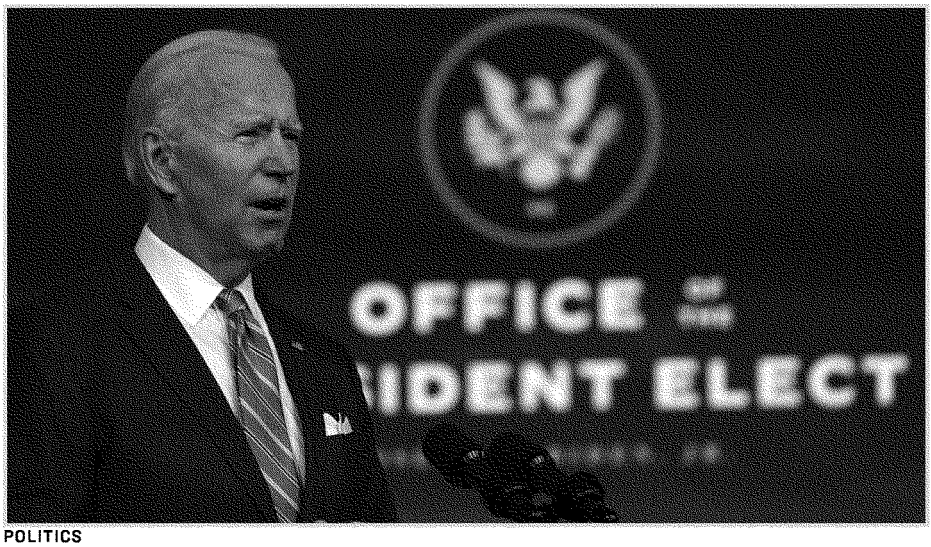

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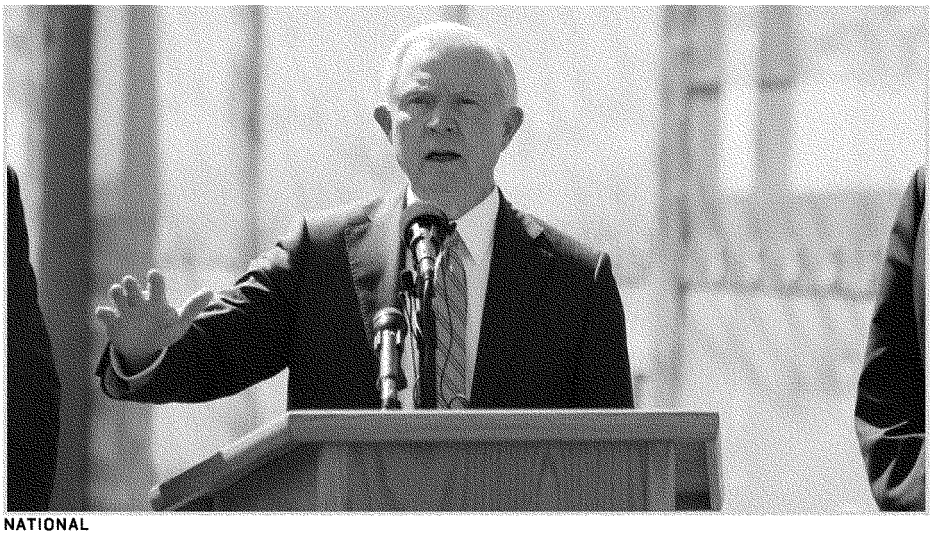

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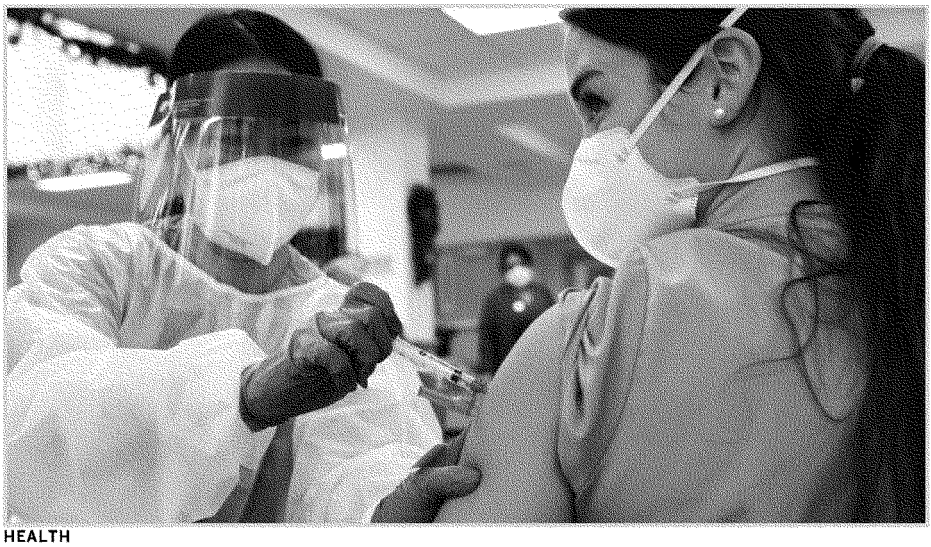

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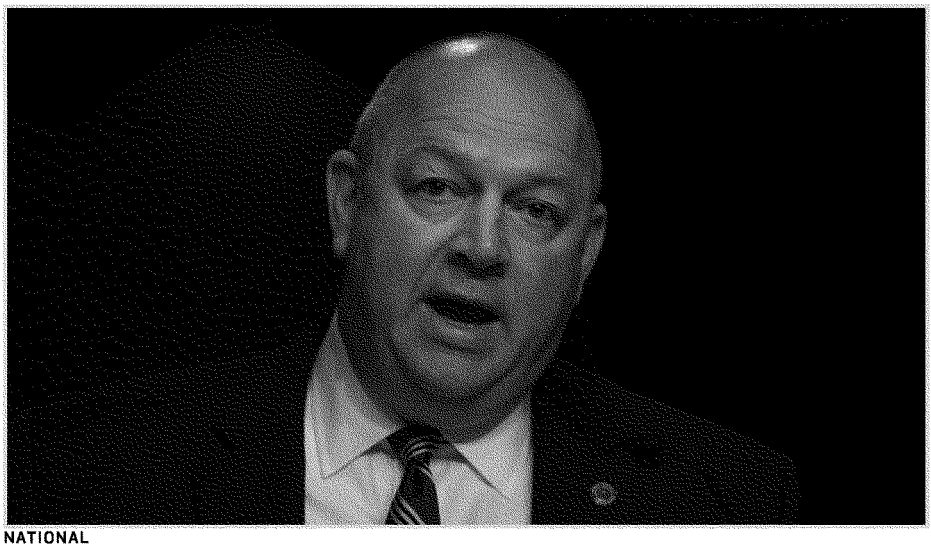

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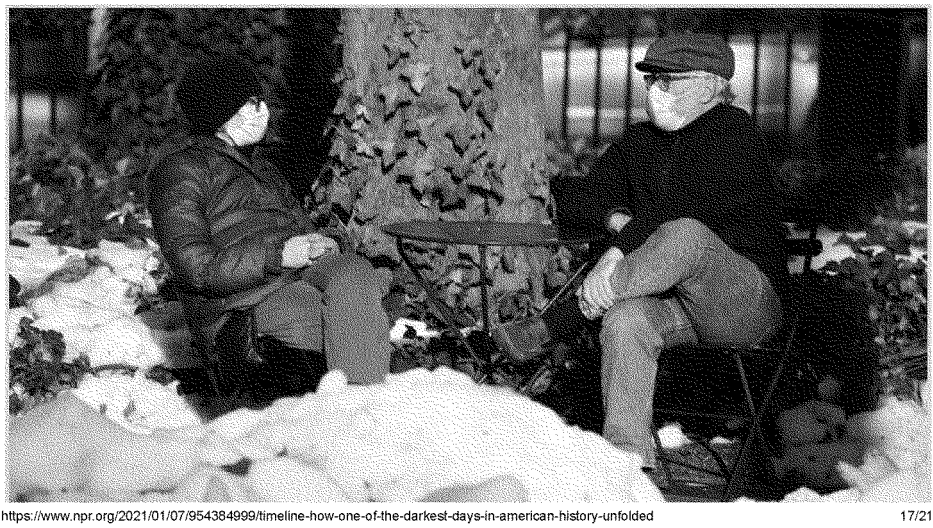

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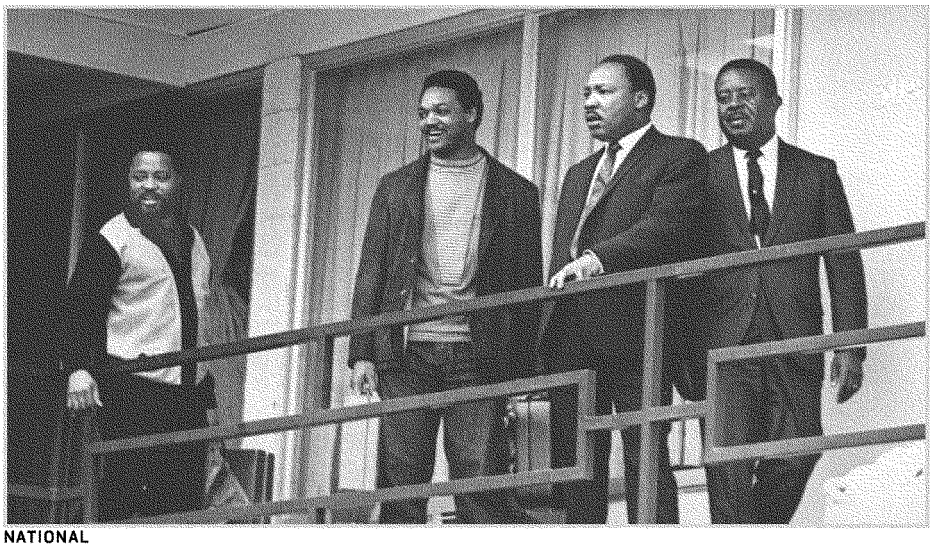

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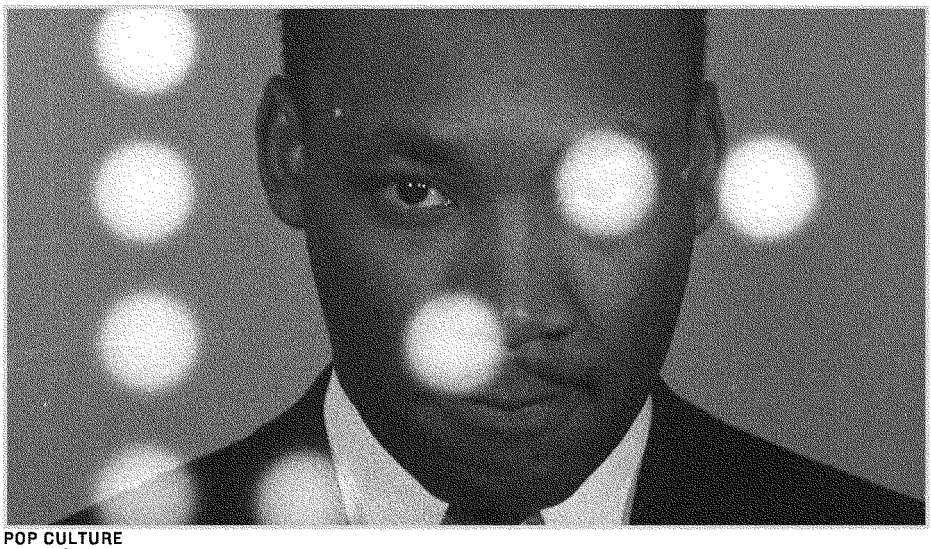

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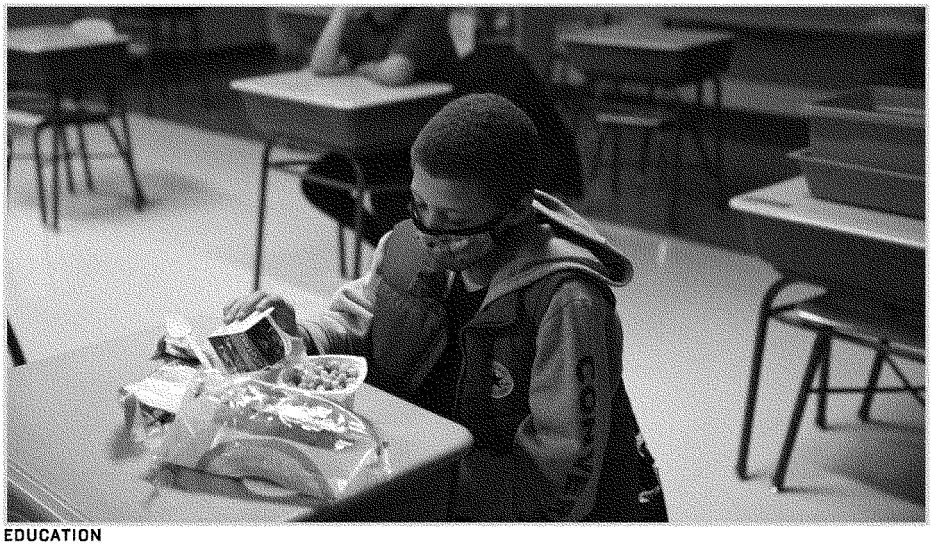

EDUCATION

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Gov. Kemp agitated by Giuliani's testimony, Trump's tweets

11alive.com/article/news/politics/elections/kemp-giuliani/85-185061d6-16b8-4204-bd72-ac3a6d8ccdb1



Elections

Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani met with Georgia state lawmakers once again on Wednesday. The subject? The outcome of the election.



ATLANTA — President Donald Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani made another appearance at the Georgia State Capitol on Wednesday.

By doing so, Giuliani caught the ire of Gov. Brian Kemp, who criticized his testimony and his behavior during a press conference Wednesday afternoon at the State Capitol.

Giuliani told a Senate subcommittee he had little use for Georgia's election recounts or election audits. That included an audit by agents of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, among others, of absentee ballot signatures in Cobb County.

The state says the signature audit yielded zero fraudulent signatures.

"The recount in Cobb County is a joke. It's an insult," Giuliani declared during the hearing.

RELATED: Secretary of State's office says 'No Fraud' in Cobb County signature audit

"That's a joke," countered Kemp during his press conference a few hours later. "He doesn't know the Georgia Bureau of Investigation very well."

Kemp also defended state troopers at the Capitol, whom he says had to manage Giuliani's unruly behavior, when the former New York City mayor couldn't find the committee hearing room.

"Him giving Georgia State Troopers on the Capitol grounds a hard time when he's trying to figure out where the committee is meeting -- we don't appreciate that down here in Georgia," Kemp said. "That's not how we treat people down here."

Kemp said he has no plan to attend a rally next Monday in Dalton for Republican senators Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue. The rally's headlining speaker is President Trump.

RELATED: Trump calls Gov. Kemp 'obstructionist,' says he should resign

Trump has repeatedly blasted Kemp for what he has called his failure to help him overturn Georgia's election results.

In a tweet on Wednesday, Trump called on Gov. Kemp to resign from office.

> Hearings from Atlanta on the Georgia Election overturn now being broadcast. Check it out. @OANN @newsmax and many more. @BrianKempGA should resign from office. He is an obstructionist who refuses to admit that we won Georgia, BIG! Also won the other Swing States.
>
> — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) December 30, 2020

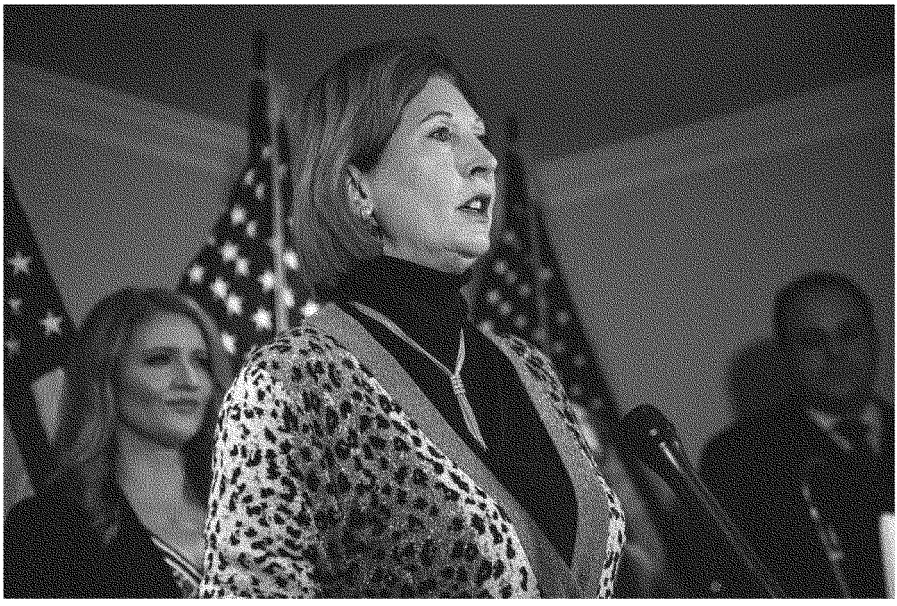
"I haven't been invited to the rally yet," Kemp said.

The governor did note that he has attended other events backing Loeffler and Perdue, who face Democratic candidates Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff in the January 5 senate runoff election.

To boost voter-fraud claims, Trump advocate Sidney Powell turns to unusual source: The longtime operator of QAnon's Internet home

washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/12/01/powell-cites-qanon-watkins/

By Drew Harwell December 1, 2020



In her legal quest to reverse the reality of last month's election, President Trump's recently disavowed attorney Sidney Powell has gained a strange new ally: the longtime administrator of the message board 8kun, the QAnon conspiracy theory's Internet home.

Powell on Tuesday filed an affidavit from Ron Watkins, the son of 8kun's owner Jim Watkins, in a Georgia lawsuit alleging that Dominion Voting Systems machines used in the election had been corrupted as part of a sprawling voter-fraud conspiracy.

Powell has claimed that a diabolical scheme backed by global communists had invisibly shifted votes with help from a mysterious computer algorithm pioneered by the long-dead Venezuelan dictator Hugo Chávez — a wild story debunked by fact-checkers as a "fantasy parade" and devoid of proof.

No real evidence was included in Watkins's affidavit, either. But Watkins, who said in the affidavit that he lives in Japan, nevertheless speculated that — based on his recent reading of the Dominion software's online user guide — it may be "within the realm of possibility" for a biased poll worker to fraudulently switch votes.

Watkins's affidavit marks one of the first official connections between a notable player in the QAnon conspiracy universe and Trump's muddled multistate legal campaign, which some of the president's allies have labeled, in the words of Chris Christie, a "national embarrassment."

Many similar Trump-QAnon overtures have already played out on TV and social media since the election nearly one month ago. Watkins made similar allegations in an unchallenged segment on the far-right One America News network, which Trump retweeted to his 88 million followers last month.

Powell and her client Michael Flynn, Trump's former national security adviser, are effectively celebrities to QAnon loyalists, who posit online that both will soon help "release the Kraken" and expose a bombshell that could salvage a Trump second term, vanquish his enemies and unveil the hidden machinations of a communist conspiracy.

Since claiming to have resigned last month from 8kun, Watkins has devoted much of his online activity to claims about unfounded suspicions regarding Dominion, an 18-year-old voting-technology company whose computer programs, ballot printers and other products are used by elections officials in 28 states. Trump and his supporters have loudly attacked the Denver-based company as having contributed in some unproved way to steal the vote.

In a lengthy rebuttal last week, Dominion said that Powell's claims were nonsensical: Manual recounts, machine tests and independent audits had reaffirmed that the voting systems had given accurate, undistorted results. Her "wild and reckless allegations," the company added, were "not only demonstrably false" but had "led to stalking, harassment, and death threats to Dominion employees."

In his affidavit, Watkins called himself an information security expert with nine years of experience as a "network and information defense analyst" and security engineer. But he did not mention that his experience had come largely through 8kun, the site once called 8chan that was knocked offline for nearly three months last year.

The message board is infamous for its anonymous threads of racist bile and extremist threats, and the site was used by gunmen to announce and celebrate three fatal attacks last year — at an El Paso Walmart, a San Diego-area synagogue and a New Zealand mosque.

Major web-services providers that form the Internet's backbone have refused to work with the site, with one executive telling The Washington Post last year that Watkins's site had facilitated "mass shootings and extreme hate speech with intolerable consequences."

Ron Watkins holds an exalted role in QAnon's online sphere of influence: He and his father are among the few people who can verify posts from Q, the conspiracy theory's unnamed prophet (and a self-proclaimed government agent with top-secret clearance) who claims to post solely on 8kun. (The strange arrangement has fueled unproved theories that the Watkinses have helped write Q's posts, or are Q themselves, which both men deny.)

Q has posted more than 4,000 times since 2017, but only three times since the election, sparking a mix of anxiety and faith-based recommitment among QAnon believers.

Attorney General William P. Barr said on Tuesday that investigators with the FBI and Justice Department hadn't "seen anything to substantiate" the claims of mass voter fraud.

But Watkins and his supporters have continued to hunt for clues to support the unproven claims of a secret Dominion scheme.

Shortly after midnight Tuesday, Watkins posted what he called "a smoking-gun video" of a Dominion worker manipulating Georgia voting data by "plugging an elections USB drive into an external laptop ... then suspiciously walking away."

The undated video — which was recorded at a distance and includes a man and woman offering ongoing commentary of the "nerd boy" as he works inside an election office — shows nothing even remotely conclusive of voter fraud: The man uses a computer and a thumb drive, all of it very obviously caught on camera.

But Watkins's messages nevertheless kicked QAnon-echoing accounts and online Trump supporters into conspiracy-theory overdrive. Many began sharing the name of a Georgia man they believed had been captured on the video, after they'd zoomed in on the man's identification badge. A number of accounts on Twitter, 8kun and other pro-Trump websites shared links to the man's possible LinkedIn profile, phone numbers, home address and personal details, including a photo of him as a groomsman in a friend's wedding in 2018.

A Dominion representative said the company wouldn't comment on alleged employee matters or safety issues, but that it was working to report all threats to law enforcement.

Watkins did not respond to questions, and a woman he had thanked on Twitter for sharing the original video said she had "no comment about anything."

The man's name and identifying information is still bouncing around the Web, with some people calling for his imprisonment, torture or execution. For several hours on Tuesday, just typing in the first two letters of his name into Twitter would automatically complete the rest of his name. One tweet includes his name and said he is "guilty of treason" and added, alongside an animated image of a hanging noose: "May God have mercy on your soul."

Gabriel Sterling, a top official with the Georgia Secretary of State's office, addressed the threat in a fiery news conference Tuesday afternoon and called out Trump and Republican senators for not condemning the violent language. Sterling said the man caught on camera had been transferring a report to a county computer so he could read it.

"It's all gone too far. All of it," he said. "This 20-year-old contractor for a voting system company [was] just trying to do this job," he added. "His family is getting harassed now. There's a noose out there with his name on it. And it's not right. ... This kid took a job. He just took a job, and it's just wrong."

Alice Crites and Julie Tate contributed to this report.

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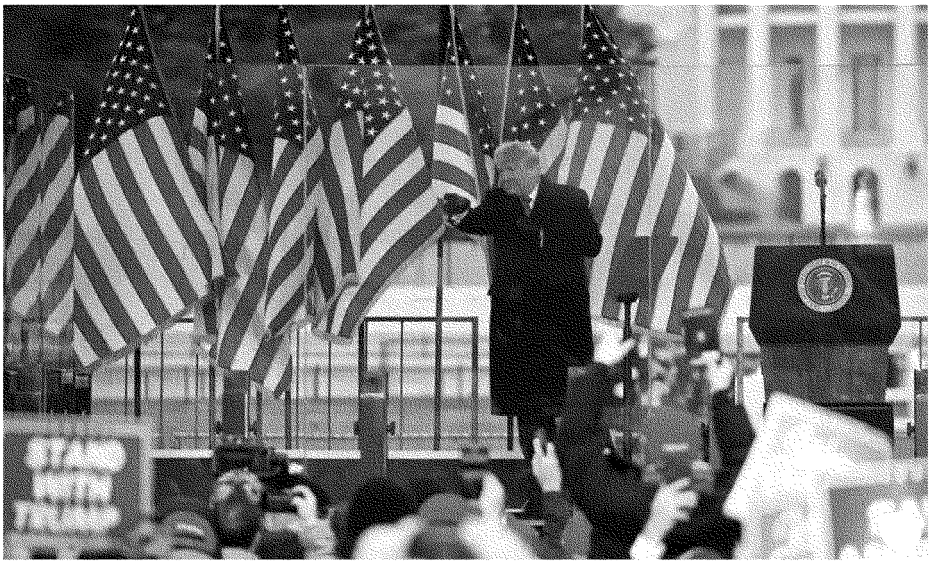
Giuliani's fantasy parade of false voter-fraud claims

Mass shooting finally pushes 8chan off the web when a service company rebels

Three mass shootings this year began with a hateful screed on 8chan. Its founder calls it a terrorist refuge in plain sight.



Donald Trump

Incitement: a timeline of Trump's inflammatory

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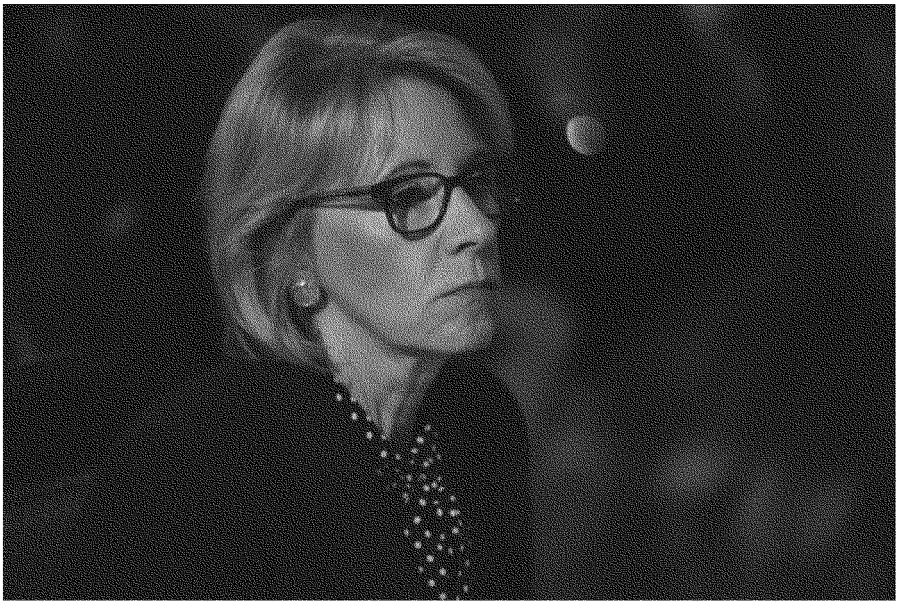
Education Secretary Devos resigns, calling president's rhetoric 'inflection point'

pbs.org/newshour/politics/education-secretary-devos-resigns-calling-presidents-rhetoric-inflection-point

Associated Press January 7, 2021



Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has become the second Cabinet secretary to resign a day after a pro-Trump insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

In a resignation letter Thursday, DeVos blamed President Donald Trump for inflaming tensions in the violent assault on the seat of the nation's democracy. She says, "There is no mistaking the impact your rhetoric had on the situation, and it is the inflection point for me."

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao tendered her resignation earlier Thursday. News of DeVos' resignation was first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

In a farewell letter to Congress earlier this week, DeVos urged lawmakers to reject policies supported by President-elect Joe Biden, and to protect Trump administration policies that Biden has promised to eliminate.

It Was Supposed to Be So Much Worse

theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/01/trump-rioters-wanted-more-violence-worse/617614/

January 9, 2021



Trump supporters erect wooden gallows near the Capitol Reflecting Pool, just one example of the racist and anti-Semitic imagery on display at the riot on Wednesday. The noose is a symbol of the lynching of Black Americans.Shay Horse / NurPhoto / Getty

On the West Lawn of the Capitol Wednesday, a man in a pom-pom beanie clamored for blood. "Execute the traitors!" he shouted into a megaphone. "I wanna see executions!"

The man got the deaths he wanted, if not the executions. Four rioters died as a result of Wednesday's insurrection at the Capitol. The mob beat a police officer with a fire extinguisher, law-enforcement sources told *The New York Times*; the officer later died. Some of them had bigger plans too: Before the protest, pro-Trump radicals had posted online about their intentions to kill Vice President Mike Pence. They brought zip ties and wore Kevlar vests. Rioters erected a wooden gallows next to the Capitol Reflecting Pool, and police discovered two pipe bombs on Capitol Hill.

The violence could have been even worse. Some of the rioters clearly wanted it to be. And Wednesday's attack may have had another, more insidious effect: to embolden extremists. Already, Trump-supporting zealots online are promising to return to Washington around Inauguration Day.

"President Trump has ignited fire within people," a protester named Maria told me on Wednesday afternoon, before either of us knew that rioters had broken into the Capitol. "Some of these guys ... they're ready to go to war or die for their country today. This is not going away anytime soon."

As the rioters breached the Capitol walls, Representative Susan Wild of Pennsylvania was in the House gallery, watching her colleagues debating on the floor below. She watched as the Capitol Police evacuated Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer. Suddenly, officers announced that rioters had entered the Capitol Rotunda, and ordered Wild and her colleagues to put on the gas masks below their chairs. Wild dropped to the floor. She and several other members of Congress crawled on their hands and knees from one side of the gallery to an open exit on the other. She FaceTimed her two adult children to reassure them. After she hung up, the panic set in—the sensation of being trapped, cornered like a caged animal. This, Wild told me, was probably the moment captured in the now widely circulated photo of her being comforted by Representative Jason Crow of Colorado, a former Army Ranger. "I had an image of an overwhelming number of armed people invading the Capitol coming in to shoot us up," she said. "I remember thinking, *Wow, this is what it's come to.*"

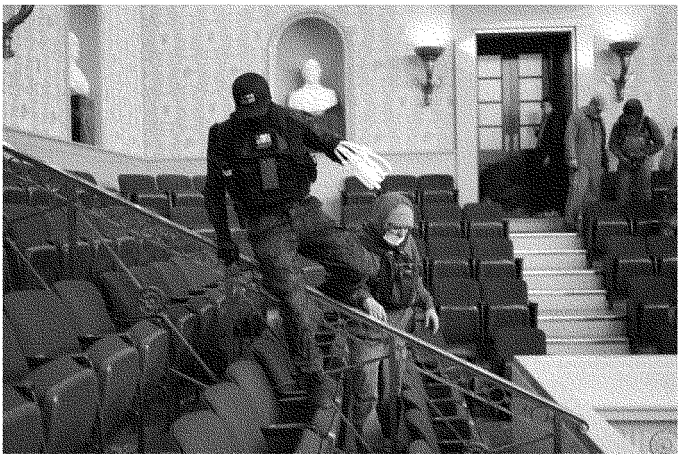
Read: Jamie Raskin lost his son. Then he fled a mob.

The rioters didn't shoot any lawmakers, but Wild was close to real danger. A screaming mob had forced its way into the Capitol on the west side, and more people were climbing through the broken windows of the east entrance. A group led by a man in a QAnon T-shirt chased a police officer up to the second floor, chanting and demanding to speak with senators. Some wore tactical gear—helmets, armor, and black masks covering their entire face. It was easy to miss them with all the coverage of the costumes and poop-smearing and poses struck in Statuary Hall, but they were there, these military-styled men, carrying blunt instruments and fistfuls of zip ties, better known as flex cuffs, capable of restraining hostages.At least one was an Air Force combat veteran, *The New Yorker* reported. They seemed to act with purpose and knew their way around the Capitol. One carried a semiautomatic weapon and 11 Molotov cocktails. Later, police officers found the two pipe bombs. The devices were outside the buildings housing the Democratic and Republican National Committees, just blocks from the Capitol. Federal agents discovered a truck full of rifles, shotguns, and bomb-making supplies parked outside the RNC headquarters.

"We are lucky, more than anything else, there wasn't a large death toll," Peter Simi, an expert on extremist groups at Chapman University, told me. "It could have been far, far worse."

Rioters could have set off these bombs, used the flex cuffs to take lawmakers hostage, or set up a kind of kangaroo court for the politicians they consider to be traitors to the MAGA cause, Simi said. "The idea of taking folks who have committed treason prisoner, those are ideas that are widely circulating in [far-right] circles," he said. "All the Democratic lawmakers

and any of the Republicans that have criticized Trump or not fully supported Trump would be eligible." A Reuters photographer on the scene said he heard at least three different rioters say they wanted to find and hang Pence, who supported certifying the results of the election.



A few of the rioters at the Capitol wore tactical gear and carried zip ties capable of restraining hostages. (Win McNamee / Getty)

Some of the rioters were well-known extremists or members of radical groups. Members of the Proud Boys, a group of self-described "Western chauvinists" who have participated in violent street rallies over the past year, attended the riot this week. Other attendees included a white-nationalist social-media personality known as Baked Alaska; at least one neo-Nazi group; and a QAnon adherent named Jake Angeli, who was dressed in an animal pelt and horns, the *Daily Beast* reports. The man who put his feet up on a desk in Pelosi's office was Richard Barnett, who'd previously called himself a white nationalist and written on Facebook that he was prepared to die violently. Some of the far-right insurrectionists live-streamed the Capitol invasion on a fringe gaming website.

On sites such as TheDonald.Win and Parler, Trump supporters had been plotting the attack for weeks, promising violence if Congress didn't overturn the results of the presidential election. They discussed the weapons they would bring and brainstormed which lawmakers they would hang first. "I'm thinking it will be literal war on that day," one commenter posted on TheDonald's forum last month, according to the *Daily Beast*. "Where we'll storm offices and physically remove and even kill all the D.C. traitors and reclaim the country."

But despite all the chatter about storming the Capitol and the general call for violence, most of the insurrectionists did not appear to have a clear blueprint for action—and the ones who seemed to have a plan were driven off by police reinforcements. Rioters killed a police officer, but they failed to follow through on their threats toward political leaders. Part of the reason

for this, Simi said, is that most of the people who entered the Capitol were not armed, and many were likely unprepared for how simple their task would be. "I think what happened was [rioters] had no idea it would be that easy to breach the perimeter, so they weren't prepared for the potential easy opportunity to do a lot of damage," Simi said.

Read: The inaction of Capitol Police was by design

Law enforcement is preparing for future violence. This week, the Army announced that it will deploy 6,000 National Guard troops for Joe Biden's inauguration. But far-right extremists are not deterred—far from it. They are already reportedly plotting more rallies, including a return to Washington, D.C., before or on the inauguration, this time with more guns. For many Trump rally-goers, the events at the Capitol on Wednesday may be the "spark" that radicalizes them, Simi told me—or further radicalizes others. Among neo-Nazis on the Telegram app, "there's been a real hailing of the predominantly MAGA crowd" that stormed the Capitol, he said. "They're saying, 'The lemmings are starting to see the light. Our ranks are growing.'"

The halls of the Capitol were quiet on Thursday morning. The only evidence of the previous afternoon's forced entry could be found on the second floor: the broken glass and boarded-up windows; the bloody bust of President Zachary Taylor; and the lonely can of Axe body spray likely tossed or dropped by a Trump devotee. The building's silence carried with it a sense of relief, like the end of a horror movie, when viewers can finally exhale. But it could just as easily mark the beginning of something worse.

Trump plans big farewell ceremony as Pence does all the work

theworldnews.net/au-news/trump-plans-big-farewell-ceremony-as-pence-does-all-the-work

By Eli Stokols

January 16, 2021 — 12.53pm

Washington: Frustrated by the loss of his Twitter account and forced to accept that he soon must leave office, President Donald Trump has effectively stopped doing his job, delegating daily responsibilities to Vice-President Mike Pence while hunkering down with a shrinking group of acquiescent aides and contemplating additional presidential pardons.

Trump had considered leaving the White House before his final day in office, even as early as this weekend, but he has opted to depart on the morning of President-elect Joe Biden's Inauguration Day, according to two people familiar with discussions who cautioned that, with Trump, plans are always subject to change.



President Donald Trump has asked for an elaborate send-off on the morning of Inauguration Day. Credit:Bloomberg

The President has requested a major send-off on the morning of inauguration. It would begin with a throng of cheering, flag-waving staffers and supporters to see him off on the White House's South Lawn, according to a person familiar with the planning, and continue to a more formal ceremony at Joint Base Andrews, featuring a red carpet, military band, colour guard and 21-gun salute. He'll make his final Air Force One flight to Florida, to take up residence at Mar-a-Lago, his West Palm Beach, Florida, estate.

While Trump is still unwilling to formally concede to Biden directly, or to participate in the traditional show of the peaceful transfer of power by attending his successor's swearing-in, Pence called Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and "congratulated her and offered assistance ahead of inauguration," according to a person familiar with the call.

Pence, his relationship with Trump all but severed now because he refused to abet the President's efforts to overturn the election result, confirmed earlier in the week that he plans to attend Biden's inauguration. Trump, in one of his final tweets last week, made it clear he would not be going.

Previously, Trump had floated the idea of leaving town early to avoid having to host Biden at the White House before the inauguration ceremonies at the Capitol, as has long been traditional - to provide the time-honoured photo of the outgoing and incoming presidents that gives visual definition to America's peaceful transfer of power. Though he now might stay until Inauguration Day, Trump still has no plans to meet with the President-elect.

Finally forced to acknowledge the "new administration" - if not his defeat - Trump has withdrawn almost completely from the duties of the job he fought so hard to keep. Aides and friends who have spoken with him this week say he's been sobered somewhat by warnings from his lawyers about his potential legal liability for inciting last week's deadly riot.

Since the moment the pro-Trump mob smashed through the Capitol doors and into the House and Senate chambers to stop Congress' count of the electoral votes, Pence has effectively taken over the responsibilities of the Presidency. With Trump mesmerised by live television coverage of his supporters fighting for him, it fell to Pence - who'd been presiding over the count, and had to be rushed into hiding - to authorise the deployment of the National Guard in the District of Columbia to quell the mob.

The President is confident the Senate will again fail to convict him, according to one person who speaks with him regularly, and last Wednesday focused his ire on the 10 House Republicans who voted in favour of impeachment, peppering aides with questions about who some of the lawmakers were and what he could do to exact revenge.

Trump has instructed aides to knock down reports of his frustration with Rudolph Giuliani, one of the few lawyers still willing to defend him. That afternoon, while Trump took farewell photos with staffers, Pence visited the headquarters of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for a briefing about security preparations for the inauguration ceremony.

After the meeting, Pence told reporters that the government would "ensure that we have a safe inauguration, that President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris are sworn in ... in a manner consistent with our history and traditions".



Vice President Mike Pence elbow bumps with a member of the National Guard as he speaks to troops outside the Capitol on Thursday evening.Credit:AP

On his way home, Pence stopped to greet some of the 20,000 National Guards posted outside the Capitol, thanking them for their service.

By Friday (Saturday AEDT), Trump still had not addressed the nation about reports from the FBI and other law

enforcement agencies that domestic terrorists, emboldened by the breach of the Capitol that left at least five dead, threatened not only the inauguration but all 50 state capitals.

My Pillow Chief Executive Mike Lindell, one of Trump's staunchest defenders in arguing that fraud cost the President reelection, was spotted around an otherwise quiet White House. As Lindell left the West Wing, a photographer captured an image showing that the notes he was holding referred to "martial law" and the "Insurrection Act".

Pence is also scheduled to deliver an address Saturday, local time, on the administration's "foreign policy accomplishments" at California's Naval Air Station Lemoore, and then to the 10th Mountain Division, in Fort Drum, New York.

Typically, outgoing Presidents take part in an official farewell ceremony with members of the armed forces. Trump, however, isn't bothering. The White House emailed a brief statement to reporters from Trump that could mark a final, 67-word valedictory.

"United States military troops in Afghanistan are at a 19-year low. Likewise, Iraq and Syria are also at the lowest point in many years," the President said. "I will always be committed to stopping the endless wars. It has been a great honour to rebuild our military and support our brave men and women in uniform. $2.5 trillion invested, including in beautiful new equipment - all made in the USA."

Loading

Spending his final days almost entirely out of view, Trump is said to be readying a number of pardons and weighing whether to give one to himself. A self-pardon would be an act of untested and dubious constitutionality.

Those who have been in contact with the President are loath to predict whether he will go through with the brazen move. His calculations now must be weighed against the unsettled matter of his impeachment trial in the Senate; a conviction could bar him from ever seeking office again.

Los Angeles Times

Trump Biden 2020

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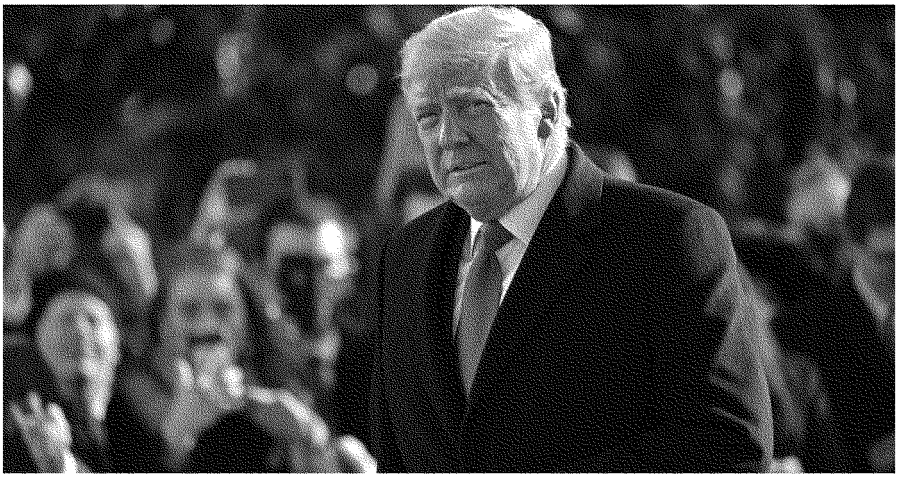
Trump retreats from his job, and Pence fills the void as 'acting' president

latimes.com/politics/story/2021-01-15/as-trump-retreats-from-his-job-pence-fills-the-void-as-acting-president

By Eli StokolsStaff Writer Jan. 15, 2021 2:41 PM UPDATED3:42 PM Facebook Twitter Show more sharing options Share Close extra sharing options Facebook Twitter LinkedIn Email Copy Link URLCopied! Print

January 15, 2021



President Trump walks to board Marine One at the White House on Tuesday as a crowd of supporters looks on.

(Associated Press)

WASHINGTON —
Frustrated by the loss of his Twitter account and forced to accept that he soon must leave office, President Trump has effectively stopped doing his job, delegating daily responsibilities to Vice President Mike Pence while hunkering down with a shrinking group of acquiescent aides and contemplating additional presidential pardons.

Trump had considered leaving the White House before his final day in office Wednesday, even as early as this weekend, but he has opted to depart on the morning of President-elect Joe Biden's Inauguration Day, according to two people familiar with discussions who cautioned that, with Trump, plans are always subject to change.

Intrigued by the idea of upstaging Biden, the president has requested a major send-off. It would begin with a throng of cheering, flag-waving staffers and supporters to see him off on the White House's South Lawn, according to a person familiar with the planning, and continue to a more formal ceremony at Joint Base Andrews, featuring a red carpet, military band, color guard and 21-gun salute. He would make his final Air Force One flight to Florida, to take up residence at Mar-a-Lago, his West Palm Beach, Fla., estate.

While Trump is still unwilling to formally concede to Biden directly, or to participate in the traditional show of the peaceful transfer of power by attending his successor's swearing-in, Pence on Thursday called Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and "congratulated her and offered assistance ahead of inauguration," according to a person familiar with the call.

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His relationship with Trump all but severed because he refused to abet the president's efforts to defy the Constitution and overturn the election result, Pence confirmed earlier in the week that he plans to attend Biden's inauguration. Trump, in one of his final tweets last week before his account was banned, made it clear he would not go.

Previously, Trump had floated the idea of leaving town early to avoid having to host Biden at the White House before the inauguration ceremonies at the Capitol, as has long been tradition — to provide the photo of the outgoing and incoming presidents that gives visual definition to the United States' peaceful transfer of power. Though he now might stay until Inauguration Day, Trump still has no plans to meet with the president-elect.

His administration this week did extend one traditional courtesy, inviting Biden and his wife, Jill Biden, to stay at Blair House, just across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, on the eve of the inauguration.

Finally forced by the bipartisan furor after last week's insurrection at the Capitol to acknowledge the "new administration" — if not his defeat — Trump has withdrawn almost completely from the duties of the job he fought so hard to keep. Aides and friends who have spoken with him this week describe him as "irate" about Twitter deleting his account but also say he's been sobered somewhat by warnings from his lawyers about his potential legal liability for inciting last week's deadly riot.

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Since the moment the pro-Trump mob smashed through the Capitol doors and into the House and Senate chambers to stop Congress' count of the electoral votes, Pence has effectively taken over the responsibilities of the presidency. With Trump mesmerized by live television coverage of his supporters fighting for him, it fell to Pence — who'd been presiding over the count and had to be rushed into hiding — to authorize the deployment of the National Guard in the District of Columbia to quell the mob.

Just a week later, the president was watching TV again — with country music star Toby Keith, to whom he gave a medal — as the House voted to impeach him on a charge of inciting insurrection, making him the only president to be impeached twice. He was confident the Senate again would not convict him, according to one person who speaks with him regularly, and focused on his ire at the 10 House Republicans who voted in favor of impeachment, peppering aides with questions about who some of the lawmakers were and what he could do to exact revenge.

World & Nation

Why veterans of the military and law enforcement joined the Capitol insurrection



World & Nation

Why veterans of the military and law enforcement joined the Capitol insurrection

Why so many military veterans and former and current police officers support — and take part in — far-right groups and protests, including the Jan. 6 Capitol riot.

More Coverage

A broad cross section of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol, arrests show. Now what?

Trump spent time Thursday instructing aides to knock down reports of his frustration with Rudolph W. Giuliani, one of the few outside attorneys still willing to defend him. That afternoon, while Trump took farewell photos with staffers as others loaded boxes into moving vans and cars just outside the West Wing, Pence visited the headquarters of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for a briefing about security preparations for the inauguration ceremony.

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After the meeting, Pence told reporters that the government would "ensure that we have a safe inauguration, that President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris are sworn in ... in a manner consistent with our history and traditions."

On his way home, Pence stopped to greet some of the 20,000 National Guard troops posted outside the Capitol, thanking them for their service to ensure the ceremonies are safe.

By Friday, Trump still had not addressed the nation about reports from the FBI and other law enforcement agencies that domestic terrorists, emboldened by the breach of the Capitol that left at least five dead, threatened not only the inauguration but also all 50 state capitols.

My Pillow Chief Executive Mike Lindell, one of Trump's staunchest defenders in arguing that fraud cost the president reelection, was spotted around an otherwise quiet White House. As Lindell left the West Wing, a photographer captured an image showing that the notes he was holding referred to "martial law" and the "Insurrection Act."

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Politics

After a year of civil unrest, the U.S. is running low on body armor and gas masks



Politics

After a year of civil unrest, the U.S. is running low on body armor and gas masks

The nation is facing a shortage of protective gear as anxiety over civil unrest has sent demand surging.

Pence is also scheduled to deliver an address Saturday on the administration's "foreign policy accomplishments" at California's Naval Air Station Lemoore, and then to the 10th Mountain Division in Fort Drum, N.Y., his office announced Wednesday.

Typically, outgoing presidents take part in an official farewell ceremony with members of the armed forces. Trump, however, isn't bothering. On Thursday, the White House emailed a brief statement to reporters from Trump that could mark a final, 67-word valedictory. It was, above all, a salute to himself.

"United States military troops in Afghanistan are at a 19-year low. Likewise, Iraq and Syria are also at the lowest point in many years," the president said. "I will always be committed to stopping the endless wars. It has been a great honor to rebuild our military and support our brave men and women in uniform. $2.5 trillion invested, including in beautiful new equipment — all made in the U.S.A."

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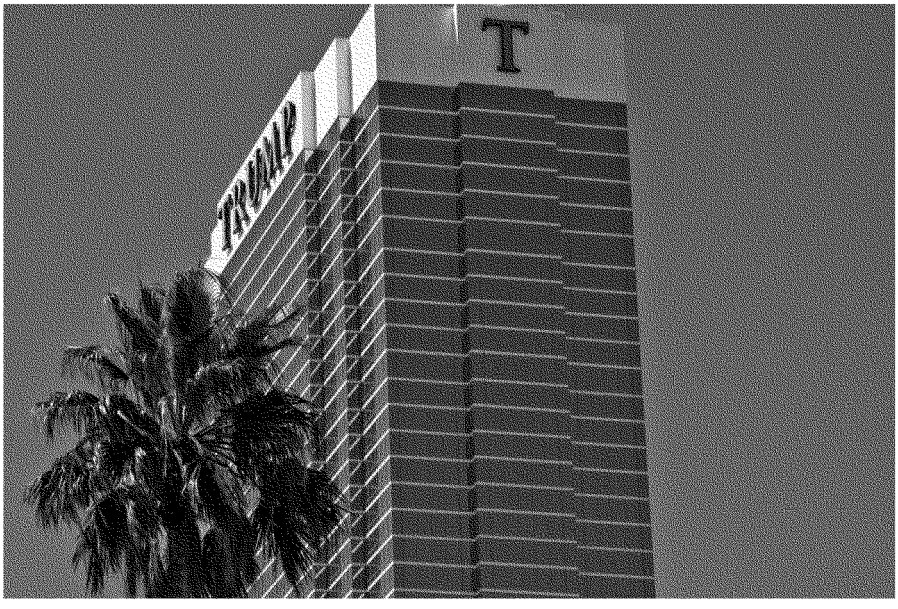
Spending his final days almost entirely out of view, Trump is said to be readying a number of pardons and weighing whether to give one to himself. A self-pardon would be an act of untested and dubious constitutionality and one — at a time when he and his family business are under investigation — suggesting indifference to the law in an effort to inoculate himself from any federal prosecutions.

Business

What will become of the Trump brand after he leaves office?



Business

What will become of the Trump brand after he leaves office?

There's always a danger in tying a company's brand to a celebrity. For the Trump Organization, there may be no recovering from the toxic associations left over from its namesake's presidency, branding experts say.

Those who have been in contact with the president are loath to predict whether he will go through with the brazen move. His calculations now must be weighed against the unsettled matter of his impeachment trial in the Senate; a conviction could bar him from ever seeking office again.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) made it clear in a statement Wednesday that he is open to voting in favor of Trump's conviction, a move some administration officials say was intended to dissuade the president from a self-pardon or any other damaging moves in his final days.

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"He knows self-pardon is fraught, will invite scrutiny and does not protect him from state actions," one former senior administration official said of Trump. But the calculation, the official said, was more about "whether it's ultimately worth the scrutiny and hassle" than any impeachment endgame.

Before Wednesday, insurgents waving Confederate flags hadn't been within 6 miles of the US Capitol

By Elliott C. McLaughlin, CNN

Updated 2:44 PM ET, Thu January 7, 2021

These Trump supporters say they're 'proud' of chaos at Capitol 02:31

(CNN) — During the United States' long Civil War, no Confederate flag came within the shadow of the US Capitol, but on Wednesday, an insurrectionist carried one right through its halls.

In an attempt to stop Congress' affirmation of President-elect Joe Biden's clear Electoral College victory in November's elections, rioters stormed the Capitol lawn. President Donald Trump's supporters forced their way inside, where lawmakers were diligently exacting democracy, and once the doors were secured, some supporters who had been locked out of the Capitol smashed windows and let themselves in.

Lawmakers, staff and journalists inside went into lockdown. Capitol Police drew their guns to defend the House chamber. Four people died.

A Trump supporter carries a Confederate flag on the second floor of the US Capitol on Wednesday.

One of the rioters -- a goateed man with a widow's peak -- was dressed more for a trip to the bar than a revolution, but what stood out was the pole he carried, taller than himself, bearing a standard flown in the Confederate rebellion against the nation 160 years ago.

Reuters and Getty photographers captured images of the man in a tan vest and jeans trotting across the Minton tile floors of the Capitol -- past the portraits of abolitionist Charles Sumner and slaveholder John Calhoun.

The man has not been identified. Where he went after the photographers snapped his photo is unknown. While there were dozens of arrests Wednesday, it's unclear if the man is among them.

The capital's defenses were 'feebly manned'

While versions of the Confederate flag have appeared in legitimate exhibits in the country's legislative headquarters, the closest any rebel carrying a Confederate flag ever came to the Capitol was about 6 miles, during the Battle of Fort Stevens on July 11 and 12, 1864.

To be clear, the Beauregard battle flag -- the red banner with the starred blue cross commonly shorthanded as "the Confederate flag" today -- was not the official ensign of the 1861 uprising. The 13-star design was used by the Second Confederate Navy and other military factions before being included in various iterations of the so-called national flag.

The version of the flag paraded through the Capitol on Wednesday wasn't so directly associated with the Confederacy at-large until the late 1940s and early 1950s, as Dixiecrats recoiled at the notion of civil rights and racial equality. White supremacists later adopted it as one of their emblems of choice.



Yet it wasn't until 2021 that an insurgent carried a flag of the rebellion into America's "citadel of liberty," to borrow the coinage of the incoming US President.

The Battle of Fort Stevens is the closest the Confederacy ever came to conquering Washington DC, according to Smithsonian Magazine. The South was battered, but on July 11, 1864, Confederate Lt. Gen. Jubal Early sat on his horse outside Fort Stevens, the Capitol dome in his view, and determined the city's defenses were "feebly manned," the magazine reported. He wasn't wrong.

Early commanded the Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia, which fought under a square version of the Confederate battle flag commonly flown today.

His commander, Gen. Robert E. Lee, was suffering a slow, bloody defeat, and attacking the Union capital might offer Lee some respite, or at least convince Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant to divert some of his troops, who were hammering Lee's forces, Smithsonian reported.

Grant's troops return as Early's men falter

Early ordered the commander of his leading division to begin the attack on the capital of the United States. The thousands of cavalry, artillerymen and infantrymen -- armed with 40 cannons -- began their assault.

Grant, who had re-deployed many of the reinforcements from Washington, taking them to battle in Petersburg and Richmond, Virginia, heard about Early's charge and ordered 17,000 troops back to the capital, the magazine said. Commanders scrounged up walking wounded and clerks to take up rifles and join the sparsely trained reserves left to defend the city.

At one point, one of Early's commanders found a gap in the defenses that could've provided an avenue to the federal navy yard and its ships, the US Treasury and warehouses of food, medicine and ammunition, but Early had a problem: After vanquishing Union forces in Lynchburg, Virginia, and Frederick, Maryland, in the hot, dry summer, his troops were exhausted, too tired to walk, according to Smithsonian.

The rioter passes portraits of slaveholder John Calhoun, left, and abolitionist Charles Sumner.

"General Early rode along the loosening formations, telling staggering, sweating, dust-begrimed men that he would take them into Washington that day. They tried to raise the old Rebel Yell to show him they were willing, but it came out cracked and thin," the magazine reported.

Before the men could muster their strength, some of Grant's men made it back to the city and opened a counterassault. Early and his men regrouped the night of the 11th and before dawn, Early took his field glasses to survey the federal fortifications.

Rather than the sharp, new uniforms worn by the clerks and walking wounded, he now saw men in faded, war-worn sky blue, and "everywhere he saw fluttering battle flags," Smithsonian said.

"I had, therefore, reluctantly to give up all hopes of capturing Washington, after I had arrived in sight of the dome of the Capitol," Early wrote in his autobiography.

President Lincoln makes history

Whereas Trump on Wednesday released a video to social media that required heavy fact-checking, President Abraham Lincoln traveled to the front lines, albeit after Early was resigned to defeat. Still, sharpshooters' rifles cracked and cannons boomed. Lincoln "bounded up to the parapet." Generals and other military leaders pleaded with him to take cover as bullets "thudded into the embankment," Smithsonian Magazine said.

Legend has it one of those leaders was Capt. Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., the future US Supreme Court justice, who, not recognizing the lanky Lincoln as his commander in chief, barked at the President, "Get down, you damn fool!"

It marked the only time a sitting President of the United States ever came under fire in combat, according to the National Park Service.

President Trump tells rioters at Capitol to 'go home' 02:07

Early ordered his men to stay in place, looking dangerous, and after darkness fell on the 12th, sometime after 10 p.m., he and his army absconded back to Virginia. And thus, no Confederate flag made it within 6 miles of the Capitol.

"Although he failed to capture the National Capital, the campaign apparently pleased him, as recounted by Major Henry Kyd Douglas," said the park service, which maintains the partially restored Fort Stevens in the Brightwood neighborhood of northwest Washington.

"On the evening of July 12, 1864, after deciding to withdraw from Washington, General Early called his staff together and declared: 'Major, we haven't taken Washington, but we scared Abe Lincoln like hell!'"

Early was relieved of command in March 1865, and following the war, he fled to Mexico, then Cuba, then Canada, before returning -- promise of amnesty in hand -- to Lynchburg, Virginia, where he resumed his pre-war occupation as an attorney and helped in "crafting the narrative of the Lost Cause," the park service said.

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Barr Authorizes Election Fraud Investigations. Why Not?

reason.com/2020/11/10/barr-authorizes-election-fraud-investigations-why-not/

November 10, 2020



Attorney General Bill Barr instructed U.S. prosecutors to look into any credible claims of election irregularities in their districts. A Monday letter from Barr is spawning a lot of worries that the Department of Justice (DOJ) backs President Donald Trump's spurious allegations of voter fraud or is at least attempting to lend credence to them. And yesterday's protest resignation of Richard Pilger, head of the DOJ branch that oversees election crimes, only added to that effect.

But Barr's letter doesn't give the impression that he's trying to help Trump hijack the election. Rather, he seems to be trying to walk a very fine line and perhaps even stamp out his boss's conspiracy claims.

There's no simply *ignoring* them at this point; not just Trump but other prominent Republicans have backed these claims of fraud, despite the total lack of evidence and the sheer scale that would've had to take place for it to have affected the election outcome. (Three states would have to be wrong, by a lot; this isn't a difference of a few hundred votes in one small area of one state, as with Florida in 2000.) Some listeners may never be convinced otherwise—but if *anyone* is to be, an inquiry blessed by Trump's top cop finding no evidence for Trump's claims is probably about the best there is to offer.

Provided these fraud claims are as bunk as they seem, then this is the best way to put them to rest.

Note that Barr isn't ordering a needle-in-a-haystack search, nor does his letter suggest that the DOJ expects to find anything. Addressed to U.S. attorneys, the assistant attorneys general of DOJ's criminal, civil rights, and national security division, and the director of the FBI, the letter authorizes inquiries into "substantial allegations of voting and vote tabulation irregularities prior to the certification of elections in your jurisdiction in certain cases."

That *substantial* there seems to be giving people the creeps, with its potential to imply endorsement of the allegations. But substantial does not mean substantiated, and there *have* been a substantial number of allegations from the president and his allies, claiming a substantial interference effort in the U.S. election that would have substantial implications. It's a weaselly word, perhaps, but not exactly wrong.

Combined with the rest of Barr's letter, I see no reason to read too much into it. His next sentence tells U.S. prosecutors to conduct inquiries "if"—*if*—"there are clear and apparently-credible allegations of irregularities that, if true, could potentially impact the outcome of a federal election in an individual State."

"While it is imperative that credible allegations be addressed in a timely and effective manner," Barr continues, "it is equally imperative that Department personnel exercise appropriate caution and maintain the Department's absolute commitment to fairness, neutrality and non-partisanship."

A bit down the page Barr stresses again that "while serious allegations should be handled with great care, specious, speculative, fanciful or far-fetched claims should not be a basis for initiating federal inquiries."

And "nothing here should be taken as any indication that the Department has concluded that voting irregularities have impacted the outcome of any election," Barr writes. He says he is offering this "authority and guidance to emphasize the need to timely and appropriately address allegations of voting irregularities so that all of the American people ... can have full confidence in the results of our elections."

Isn't that what we want? Trump's claims can't be unheard by the many people who have heard them. Many people seem to believe them. No amount of media reporting otherwise—even by Fox News—is going to change their minds. Some amount of official attention to this is going to have to happen, and Barr's response seems measured and proportionate.

> Fox News just cut away from @PressSec, saying the network could not in good conscience continue to air her false claims, for which she has provided no supporting evidence.
>
> — Ashley Parker (@AshleyRParker) November 9, 2020

Even Trump's people are dissatisfied...

"This is not what some of us wanted. This is not what I wanted," a senior Trump campaign official told *The Daily Beast*. "This will give the president [and others] something to play with for a while, but until Bill Barr actually puts up or shuts up, we're still where we [have been]."

FREE MINDS

The Supreme Court is considering *Brownback v. King*, a case involving qualified immunity for police officers. Here's how it started:

> Twenty-one-year-old college student James King was walking between his summer jobs one afternoon. On his walk, he was approached by two plain-clothes officers, Douglas Brownback and Todd Allen, who were assigned to an FBI fugitive task force in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Brownback and Allen were on the lookout for a home invasion suspect. They did not have a clear or recent picture of the suspect, but they knew he was a 26-year-old white male, between 5-feet-10-inches and 6-feet-3-inches tall, who wore glasses, and apparently bought soda from the same gas station around the same time every day. Unfortunately for King, he fit the general description and was walking near the gas station, so Brownback and Allen decided to stop him.
>
> While King at first acquiesced to the stop after spying badges hanging around the officers' necks, when the officers took his wallet from his pocket, King asked if he was being mugged and tried to run away. The officers tackled him to the ground, and when King put up a struggle, they choked him and punched him repeatedly in the head, causing one onlooker to tell the 911 operator that the officers were "gonna kill this man." As it turns out, King wasn't the suspect. And when the state of Michigan nevertheless prosecuted King for resisting arrest, a jury acquitted him of all charges.

Read more about the case at *SCOTUSBlog*, or check out the Cato Institute's amicus brief.

"While the issues raised by *Brownback v. King* may seem abstruse, the implications for King are clear: If the Court decides the 6th Circuit got it wrong, he will not be allowed even to try holding Allen and Brownback accountable for appalling conduct—conduct that the appeals court said a jury could reasonably decide violated his Fourth Amendment rights," explains *Reason*'s Jacob Sullum. "According to the government, that is the outcome demanded by a law Congress passed to help victims of government abuse."

FREE MARKETS

SCOTUS today will hear oral arguments in *California v. Texas*, a case challenging the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The case turns on three questions, including a question of whether plaintiffs even have standing to challenge the ACA's

individual mandate—which penalized people for not having health insurance—now that there's no financial penalty for refusing to comply. From Jonathan Adler at *The Volokh Conspiracy*:

> A threshold issue in *California v. Texas*, the Affordable Care Act case to be argued on Tuesday, is whether any of the plaintiffs have standing to challenge the so-called "individual mandate." This is a serious question because in 2017 Congress eliminated the financial penalty that had been used to enforce the mandate. As originally enacted in 2010, the ACA instructed Americans to obtain qualifying health insurance, and threatened to impose a tax penalty on those who failed to comply. Now, however, the instruction remains in the U.S. Code, but the financial penalty for noncompliance is gone.
>
> Ordinarily, plaintiffs who seek to challenge a governmental action must allege that they will suffer a cognizable injury from the government imposition. So, for instance, an oil refinery challenging an environmental regulation would allege that they must spend money installing mandated pollution control equipment or face enforcement actions, backed by fines and other penalties. This injury requirement is rooted in Article III of the Constitution. As such, the Supreme Court has held, if a plaintiff cannot allege a sufficient injury, federal courts have no power to hear their case.
>
> The lack of a penalty to enforce the individual mandate would seem to defeat any claim of standing on behalf of the plaintiffs. Yet the lower courts (and the Department of Justice) have acquiesced to their standing claims.

More on the case here and here.

QUICK HITS

• In the latest *Reason Roundtable* podcast, Nick Gillespie, Katherine Mangu-Ward, Peter Suderman, and Matt Welch discuss whether the election outcome was good for libertarians.

• "The Trump White House on Monday instructed senior government leaders to block cooperation with President-elect Joe Biden's transition team, escalating a standoff that threatens to impede the transfer of power and prompting the Biden team to consider legal action," *The Washington Post* reports.

• The Justice Department will let Uber acquire Postmates.

Black Police Officers Describe The Racist Attacks They Faced As They Protected The Capitol

buzzfeednews.com/article/emmanuelfelton/black-capitol-police-racism-mob





Shannon Stapleton / Reuters
Tear gas is released into a crowd of protesters during clashes with Capitol police on Jan. 6, 2021.

The first glimpse of the deadly tragedy that was about to unfold came at 9 a.m. on the morning of the insurrection for one Black veteran of the US Capitol Police. But it didn't come from his superiors — instead the officer had to rely on a screenshot from Instagram sent to him by a friend.

"I found out what they were planning when a friend of mine screenshot me an Instagram story from the Proud Boys saying, 'We're breaching the Capitol today, guys. I hope y'all ready.'" The officer, who asked to remain anonymous out of fear of retaliation from his superiors, told BuzzFeed News that it was just a sign of the chaos that was to come, which saw officers regularly finding themselves unprepared and then outmanned and overpowered by the mob.

The officer said that while the department's upper management had been telling them to prepare for Wednesday's storming of the Capitol like they would for any other protest, that Instagram post sent a clear message: this wasn't going to be just some kind of free speech protest — this was going to be a fight.

Management's inaction left Black police officers especially vulnerable to a mob that had been whipped up by President Donald Trump, a man who has a record of inspiring racist vigilantes to action. One of the most defining videos of that day was of one of their colleagues, another Black officer, trying in vain to hold back the tide of rioters who had broken into the building and were hunting for Congressional members.

BuzzFeed News spoke to two Black officers who described a harrowing day in which they were forced to endure racist abuse — including repeatedly being called the n-word — as they tried to do their job of protecting the Capitol building, and by extension the very functioning of American democracy. The officers said they were wrong-footed, fighting off an invading force that their managers had downplayed and not prepared them for. They had all been issued gas masks, for example, but management didn't tell them to bring them in on the day. Capitol Police did not respond to BuzzFeed News' request for comment about the allegations made by officers.



Igor Bobic @igorbobic

Here's the scary moment when protesters initially got into the building from the first floor and made their way outside Senate chamber.

08:09 PM - 06 Jan 2021

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While some of the images from that day appeared to show officers standing by to let the mob into the Capitol building, the veteran officer said that they had fought them off for two hours before the attackers eventually gained access. The officer said that many of the widely spread images of smiling marauders, wandering the halls dressed in absurd costumes, had the effect of downplaying how well prepared some of the rioters were to overtake the building, and even to capture and kill Congress members.

"That was a heavily trained group of militia terrorists that attacked us," said the officer, who has been with the department for more than a decade. "They had radios, we found them, they had two-way communicators and earpieces. They had bear spray. They had flash bangs ... They were prepared. They strategically put two IEDs, pipe bombs, in two different locations. These guys were military trained. A lot of them were former military," the officer said, referring to two suspected pipe bombs that were found outside the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee.

The officer even described coming face-to-face with police officers from across the country in the mob. He said some of them flashed their badges, telling him to let them through, and trying to explain that this was all part of a movement that was supposed to help.

"You have the nerve to be holding a Blue Lives Matter flag, and you are out there fucking us up," he told one group of protesters he encountered inside the Capitol. "[One guy] pulled out his badge and he said, 'We're doing this for you.' Another guy had his badge. So I was like, 'Well, you gotta be kidding.'"

Another officer, a newer recruit, echoed these sentiments, saying that where he was on the steps to the Rotunda on the east side of the Capitol, he was engaged in hand-to-hand battles trying to fight the attackers off. But he said they were outnumbered 10 to 1, and described extraordinary scenes in which protesters holding Blue Lives Matter flags launched themselves at police officers.

"We were telling them to back up and get away and stop, and they're telling us they are on our side, and they're doing this for us, and they're saying this as I'm getting punched in my face by one of them ... That happened to a lot of us. We were getting pepper-sprayed in the face by those protesters — I'm not going to even call them protesters — by those domestic terrorists," said the officer.

While it was a hard day for almost every officer at the Capitol, Black officers were in a particularly difficult position, he said, and he drew a stark contrast with how police handled the Black Lives Matter protests this summer.

"There's quite a big difference when the Black Lives Matter protests come up to the Capitol," he said. "[On Wednesday], some officers were catering to the rioters."

He said that what upset him the most was when he later saw images of a white colleague taking a selfie with the attackers, seeming to enjoy his time with the insurrectionists who were roaming the US Capitol with Confederate flags and other symbols of white supremacy.

"That one hurt me the most because I was on the other side of the Capitol getting my ass kicked," he said.

He is certain that if a group of Black Americans had stormed the Capitol, they wouldn't have gotten that kind of friendly reception from his white colleagues.

"If you're going to treat a group of demonstrators for Black Lives Matters one way, then you should treat this group the same goddamn way. With this group you were being kind and nice and letting them walk back out. Some of them got arrested but a lot of them didn't. Everyone who came into that Capitol should have been arrested regardless if they didn't take anything."

The number of arrests has steadily increased in recent days, but it currently seems unlikely that everyone who breached the building on Wednesday will be arrested for their actions.

Five people died on Wednesday, including a Capitol Police officer. One protester was shot and killed by Capitol Police, while three others died of medical emergencies during the attack.

The older Black officer didn't think it was a simple case of treating the rioters differently from BLM protesters, but instead part of a bigger issue with how the agency is managed.

"Our chief was nowhere to be found, I didn't hear him on the radio. One of our other deputy chiefs was not there," he said. "You don't think it's all hands on deck?"

The veteran officer welcomed the resignation of US Capitol Police chief, Steven Sund, but he thinks more needs to change at the agency, which answers to Congress and where security is not as tight as it should be.

"Congress can bring anybody in the building that they want. They can go outside and find 200 people, and say, 'Hey, they're with me. Come on in.' They don't have to go through security as long as a congressman said so," he explained. "They just want to make Congress happy. So I think the next chief needs to come in and sit down with Congress."

At the end of the night, after the crowds had been dispersed and Congress got back to the business of certifying president-elect Joe Biden's victory, the veteran officer was overwhelmed with emotion, and broke down in the Rotunda.

"I sat down with one of my buddies, another Black guy, and tears just started streaming down my face," he said. "I said, 'What the fuck, man? Is this America? What the fuck just happened? I'm so sick and tired of this shit.'"

Soon he was screaming, so that everyone in the Rotunda, including his white colleagues, could hear what he had just gone through.

"These are racist-ass terrorists," he yelled out.

In the seven years since Black Lives Matter has become a rallying cry, the image of a white cop deciding how and when to enforce law and order has become ubiquitous. On Wednesday, Americans saw something different, as Black officers tried to do the same, as they attempted to protect the very heart of American democracy. And instead of being honored by the supporters of a man who likes to call himself the "law and order" president, Black Capitol officers found themselves under attack.

"I got called a nigger 15 times today," the veteran officer shouted in the Rotunda to no one in particular. "Trump did this and we got all of these fucking people in our department that voted for him. How the fuck can you support him?"

"I cried for about 15 minutes and I just let it out."

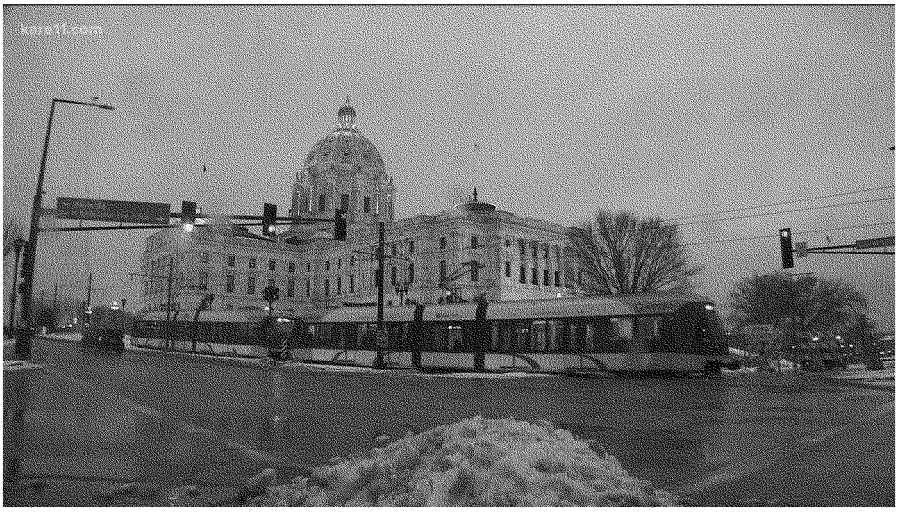
'No credible threats' to Minnesota Capitol but security to remain high through inauguration

kare11.com/article/news/local/walz-minnesota-capitol-security-inauguration/89-26e52632-36d8-4d8f-86d8-559bf3c6b916



Local News

The DPS commissioner says there are no immediate, credible threats to the Minnesota Capitol, but law enforcement is still preparing robust security this weekend.



ST PAUL, Minn — State leaders are giving an update on their plans to keep the Minnesota State Capitol - and Minnesotans - safe in the days leading up to Inauguration Day.

Gov. Tim Walz held a news conference Friday at noon, along with Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan and St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter.

Security officials from the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Minnesota National Guard, the Minnesota State Patrol, and St. Paul police joined the governor to give the public an "update on security concerns at the Minnesota Capitol following the violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol last week and continued threats to state capitols," according to a news release from the governor's office.

Walz said he and the American public are still processing the insurrection that happened at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. He said that's why he toured historic locations in Minnesota this week, calling for unity.

"What are parallels to this?" Walz said "Honestly I'm not sure there is one. ... But there are times in Minnesota history that call for our better angels."

He referenced the FBI's warning that there are possible armed protests planned for every state Capitol.

"To be very clear with Minnesotans, we take the threats to our Capitol and to our citizens very seriously," Walz said.

Walz said the FBI specifically singled out Minnesota and Michigan.

"I don't think it's by chance that it was those two," he said. He pointed out President Donald Trump's tweets that called for "liberating" Minnesota and Michigan.

"Shame on this country if we try to normalize what's happening," he said.

Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) Commissioner John Harrington said that he and other state law enforcement support the right for people to exercise their First Amendment rights to protest.

"But we also take our responsibility and our commitment to protect life, to protect liberty, and to keep the peace, just as seriously," he said. "From the steps of the Capitol, to the borders of the Dakotas and to the streets of our cities, we have been there to keep the peace."

Harrington said DPS stands ready to protect the Constitution and the law and "a peaceful transition of power." He said law enforcement will protect the Capitol, the people's representatives, and the community.

"There are still no credible threats to the Minnesota State Capitol," Harrington said.

He said the FBI memos that are being widely cited in news reports are "pretty dated material."

"There is no credible, local, immediate threat in the state of Minnesota. That doesn't mean that there wasn't a threat back in December when that information was developed," he said. "We are turning over every rock and looking under every bush to see if there is anything else out there."

Harrington said neither the FBI, Department of Homeland Security or BCA have found any credible, local threats at this time.

"We can't err on the side of having too few people," Walz said. "You have to err on the side of having too many people."

RELATED: Minnesota Capitol security boosted ahead of Biden's inauguration

DPS has up-to-the-moment daily information about potential threats, Harrington said.

"No matter how small or how large, we have taken the right steps to stop that from happening," he said. "No detail has been overlooked. We have got a plan that is both robust, and is resilient."

Harrington also promised "respectful" policing.

"We are prepared to keep the peace as long as it takes," he said. "You're not going to have to look for us. There is no end date on keeping the peace."

Harrington said for everyone who wants to come to the Capitol and have their voice heard, law enforcement will protect them. But he said they will be there to stop anyone with a different agenda.

"If you come to the Capitol to commit violent crimes," he said, "we will stop you. We will hold you accountable. Our state capitol is a safe place. It is the people's house."

Harrington said possible strategies to protect peaceful protesters include creating a buffer zone, or designating "free speech zones" so any conflicting groups are not immediately adjacent to each other.

Harrington said the security plan includes several state and local agencies, along with the Minnesota National Guard.

"It is one of the best plans that I've ever been party to," he said. "I am very, very comfortable. And I want you all to be comfortable and assured that there has been nothing left undone to keep the Capitol safe."



Minnesota State Patrol Col. Matt Langer said that people may see increased traffic control around the State Capitol in the coming days, and more state troopers stationed there to "keep the peace." He encouraged people to report any suspicious activity they see.

"If you see something say something," he said. "We want to know about it."

Minnesota National Guard Adjutant General Shawn Manke said one company with about 100 citizen soldiers has been activated to help protect the public in Minnesota, but the Guard is flexible to activate more members as needed. More than 850 Minnesota National Guard

members will also be sent to Washington, D.C., to help protect the inauguration on Jan. 20.

RELATED: Gov. Walz calls for calm, reflection

St. Paul Police Chief Todd Axtell said the level of hate he's witnessed recently is like nothing he's seen in 33 years. He recalled his reaction to the violence at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

"It's disgusting, it's uncalled for, it's something that I never thought I would observe in my lifetime," he said.

Axtell commended the U.S. Capitol police for their work that day. "They battled back to protect our Democracy and to protect our elected officials," he said.

Axtell said the goal of St. Paul police is not just to keep people safe, but to make sure they feel safe as well. He said he will be on a call with capital city police chiefs across the country on Friday to help one another strategize.

RELATED: Minnesota DPS taking extra precautions after FBI warns of possible armed nationwide protests

On Thursday DPS said while the State Capitol remains a safe place, state officials are asking residents who aren't working or doing business there to stay home. Among the measures being taken to guard against potentially violent activity include:

- State Patrol troopers, Department of Natural Resources conservation officers and National Guard soldiers will be visible and available to respond to various threats.
- Traffic restrictions will be in place around the Capitol. Only state agency employees, contractors, deliveries and those with official state business will be able to drive in the restricted area. Foot traffic will be allowed.
- A fence put up last summer in the wake of George Floyd's death and subsequent protests remains in use.

"We will continue to track and monitor reports of any individuals or groups that are not interested in a peaceful expression of their First Amendment rights so we can respond accordingly," said DPS Commissioner John Harrington in a news release Thursday. "We have been working with our law enforcement partners to develop a coordinated and comprehensive plan to guard the Capitol and protect state employees, visitors and peaceful protestors from harm."

Harrington said Friday that there has not been any discussion about a weekend curfew at this point "based on the current information that we have."

Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan said her reaction to the Jan. 6 violence, and to threats against the State Capitol, is "visceral."

"It's the people's house," she said. "It's our house. It is a symbol for Democracy."

Flanagan said Minnesotans can be assured that state leadership is taking action to put security in place.

"We are not panicking," she said. "We are concerned. We are alert. And we are prepared. And I take this personally. ... This is your house, and you should feel safe in your house."

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter said he has spent the last week and a half in "very deep reflection about how we could be at the place that we're at."

"How we could be at a place where people could not only mob the nation's Capitol," he said. "But how they could get inside those walls. How they could reach those walls with the Confederate flag. A symbol that has forever been in our country a symbol of hate, a symbol of divisiveness. How that flag could fly in that building when it didn't even fly in that building during the Civil War."

Carter pointed out that COVID-19 has not necessarily created new crises in the U.S., but exacerbated longstanding issues. He said he believes the storming of the U.S. Capitol was similar.

"What we saw last week was the blossoming of flowers that have been planted and watered very intentionally, that have existed in our country for a very long time," he said. "As devastating as those events were. As saddening as those events were."

Carter said he hopes and prays these events will force people to "put on the table" something that has already existed under the surface.

Carter said that he, state public safety officials, St. Paul police, the Minnesota National Guard and Minnesota State Patrol have been briefed on any possible threats locally.

"We stand prepared to meet those threats," he said. "We are concerned with the security of our State Capitol, and we are prepared to secure the State Capitol."

Carter said they are also prepared to protect the surrounding neighborhoods.

DPS Commissioner Harrington said that because much of the rhetoric around potential violence has been "anti-government," many security efforts are focused around the Capitol. However, he said law enforcement is still working to protect the community and other potential targets.

The extra measures follow the attack of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, as well as some of the threatening language used by speakers at the Minnesota "Storm the Capitol" rally the same day.

The FBI's Minneapolis office also issued an alert in late December warning of potential violence at the State Capitol in the weekend leading up to the Jan. 20 inauguration, and an FBI memo reported possible armed protests at every state capitol nationwide in that same

time period.

RELATED: FBI bulletin warns armed protests being planned at almost every state capitol

Flanagan and Walz said at Friday's news conference that "it's time" to have another conversation about whether people should be able to carry firearms at the Minnesota State Capitol. Currently it is legal, with a permit to carry.

Despite the lack of specific threats, several other government entities have taken measures ahead of potential protests at the Capitol in the coming week.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) will remove four blue collection boxes in St. Paul, located at:

- 20 12th St W, St. Paul, MN 55101
- 395 John Ireland Blvd, St. Paul, MN 55101
- 95 University Ave W, St. Paul, MN 55101
- 175 Aurora Ave, St. Paul, MN 55103

These will be returned to their original locations "when safe to do," according to a USPS press release Friday.

Federal courthouses in Fergus Falls, Minneapolis and St. Paul have also been ordered to close on Jan. 19-20 ahead of Inauguration Day. All court staff will be working from home on those days, and will be available to offer assistance by phone and email.

Trump officials who have resigned in the wake of attack on Capitol

abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-officials-resigned-wake-attack-capitol/story



"I wouldn't be surprised to see more of my friends resign."

2:05

Capitol police chief resigns as outrage grows after pro-Trump riot

Democrats and Republicans are searching for answers for the "massive and shocking" security failures that allowed mobs to storm the complex and led to five deaths.

Leah Millis/Reuters
In the wake of an assault on the Capitol Wednesday by a pro-Trump mob that led to four deaths, a growing number of Trump officials are questioning their roles in his administration, some going so far as to resign from their positions.

These are the Trump officials who have given notice so far.

Betsy DeVos: Education secretary
Betsy DeVos, U.S. secretary of education, resigned Thursday, according to a letter obtained by ABC News. Her resignation will take effect on Friday.

"We should be highlighting and celebrating your Administration's many accomplishments on behalf of the American people. Instead, we are left to clean up the mess caused by violent protestors overrunning the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to undermine the people's business," DeVos wrote in her resignation letter, addressed to President Donald Trump.

"That behavior was unconscionable for our country," she continued. "There is no mistaking the impact your rhetoric had on the situation, and it is the inflection point for me."

Elaine Chao: Transportation secretary
Elaine Chao, U.S. secretary of transportation and wife of Sen. Mitch McConnell, resigned from her role Thursday. Her resignation will take effect on Jan. 11.

"Yesterday, our country experienced a traumatic and entirely avoidable event as supporters of the President stormed the Capitol building following a rally he addressed," Chao wrote in a letter that she posted to Twitter.

"As I'm sure is the case with many of you, it has deeply troubled in me a way I simply cannot set aside," she added.

Tyler Goodspeed: Acting chairman, White House Council of Economic Advisers
Tyler Goodspeed, acting chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, resigned Thursday, according to Rachael Slobodien, the council's chief of staff.

"The events of yesterday made my position no longer tenable," Goodspeed told The New York Times after he tendered his resignation.

John Costello: Deputy assistant secretary for intelligence and security, Commerce Department
John Costello, the deputy assistant secretary for intelligence and security in the Commerce Department, resigned Thursday.

Mick Mulvaney: Special envoy to Northern Ireland
Mick Mulvaney, the former White House chief of staff who still held a role in the administration as special envoy to Northern Ireland, called Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday night to resign.

"I can't do it. I can't stay," he told CNBC on Thursday. "It's a nothing thing. It doesn't affect the outcome. It doesn't affect the transition. But it's what I've got, right, and it's a position I really enjoy doing. But you can't do it. And I wouldn't be surprised to see more of my friends resign over the course of the next 24 to 48 hours."

Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post via Getty Images, FILE
In this March, 2, 2020, file photo, Acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney listens as President Donald Trump holds a meeting in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, DC.

When asked if he considered himself an enabler of Trump in retrospect, Mulvaney said it was "a fair question."

Matthew Pottinger: White House deputy national security adviser
Matthew Pottinger, the White House deputy national security adviser, resigned Wednesday, according to a White House official and a person familiar with his resignation.

The White House's National Security Council did not respond to questions from ABC News about Pottinger, who was an assistant to the president.

MORE: 4 dead after Capitol breached by pro-Trump mob during 'failed insurrection'
Sarah Matthews: White House deputy press secretary
Sarah Matthews, White House deputy press secretary, resigned on Wednesday in response to the assault on the Capitol.

"As someone who worked in the halls of Congress I was deeply disturbed by what I saw today," Matthews said in a statement. "I'll be stepping down from my role, effective immediately. Our nation needs a peaceful transfer of power."

MORE: Trump-Biden transition live updates: Pence announces Biden as next president, Trump accepts defeat
Rickie Niceta: White House social secretary
Rickie Niceta, White House social secretary, submitted her resignation Wednesday in reaction to the protests.

Stephanie Grisham: Melania Trump's chief of staff
Stephanie Grisham, first lady Melania Trump's chief of staff and former White House press secretary, resigned on Wednesday due to the protests.

"It has been an honor to serve the country in the White House," Grisham told ABC News in a statement.

"I am very proud to have been a part of Mrs. Trump's mission to help children everywhere, and proud of the many accomplishments of this Administration."

FAA appointees
Five Federal Aviation Administration administrators submitted resignation letters Thursday evening, according to an email obtained by ABC News from FAA Chief of Staff Angela Stubblefield to senior managers.

Per the email, they are:

- Arjun Garg, chief counsel and current acting deputy FAA Administrator
- Brianna Manzelli, assistant administrator for communications
- Kirk Shaffer, assistant administrator for airports

- Bailey Edwards, assistant administrator for policy, international affairs and environment
- Andrew Giacini, acting administrator for legislative affairs

"Our colleagues' decisions, given the gravity of yesterday's events, are understandable. Like all of us, they are outraged by the brazen and violent attack on one of the sacred institutions of American democracy," Stubblefield wrote in the email.

The resignations are effective Monday evening, she wrote.

Anthony Ruggiero: National Security Council senior official

Anthony Ruggiero, the senior director for counterproliferation and biodefense on the National Security Council, resigned Thursday, a source familiar with the situation confirmed to ABC News.

Dr. Chris Ford: State Department assistant secretary

The State Department lost its first assistant secretary over the week's events. Dr. Chris Ford, the top diplomat for arms control, resigned Friday, a source familiar with the situation confirmed to ABC News.

ABC News' Jonathan Karl, Conor Finnegan, Benjamin Gittleson, Sam Sweeney, John Santucci and Sophie Tatum contributed to this report.

The New York Times | https://nyti.ms/3sohFUH

VISUAL INVESTIGATIONS

'They Got a Officer!': How a Mob Dragged and Beat Police at the Capitol

Videos show pro-Trump rioters pulling three officers down a set of stairs during a violent attempt to breach the building.

By Evan Hill, Arielle Ray and Dahlia Kozlowsky

Jan. 11, 2021

The Jan. 6 assault on the Capitol building by a pro-Trump mob left a police officer and a rioter dead. More than 50 members of the U.S. Capitol Police were injured, including 15 who required hospitalization, most of them with head wounds, according to Representative Tim Ryan, Democrat of Ohio.

Of all the scenes of violence, one of the most intense occurred during a struggle to breach a west-side door, during which multiple rioters dragged police officers out of a formation and assaulted them while they were trapped in the crowd.

There was widespread speculation on social media that one of the officers was Brian Sicknick — the U.S. Capitol Police officer who died after being hit in the head by a rioter wielding a fire extinguisher. But videos show the officers involved in this incident were members of the Metropolitan Police Department.

Here's how the assault happened.

Shortly after 2 p.m., the mob on the Capitol's west side forced its way through the final, thinly-defended police barricades and reached the building's walls.

Hundreds of rioters swarmed toward a west-side doorway that's traditionally used when presidents emerge for their inauguration ceremonies.

They surged into the doorway, and an hours-long fight to breach the Capitol began.

Not long after the start of the struggle, rioters were captured on video pulling a Metropolitan Police officer down the stairs. In a video, some rioters can be heard urging others not to hurt him.

News photographers on the scene captured images of the officer caught in the crowd, which began chanting "police stand down!"



A Metropolitan Police officer who has been pulled away from his colleagues by rioters is caught in the mob. Shannon Stapleton/Reuters

The mob pulled the officer away, and rioters continued to try to force their way past the police defending the doorway.

RACE/RELATED: *A deep and provocative exploration of race, identity and society with New York Times journalists.* Sign Up

They climbed on top of each other to attack the officers with stolen Capitol Police shields, sticks and poles.

During a brief lull, some rioters appeared to give up and retreat down the stairway.

But a new group lunged toward the police and started a new attack. At the front of the mob, they exchanged blows with the police and struck officers with hockey sticks, crutches and flags. Some rioters shouted "Push! Push!"

One of the attackers, a man wearing a white and blue hat and a green jacket, reached into the doorway, grabbed an officer and dragged him out, aided by a man in a gray hooded sweatshirt.

As they pulled the officer down the stairs, face down, another rioter beat him with an American flag as the mob chanted "USA! USA! USA!"

Seconds later, two other men — one wearing a red hat and tactical vest bearing a "sheriff" patch — began yanking the legs of another officer who had fallen to the ground.

With the aid of a third man in a gray jacket, they pulled the officer down the steps as well. One rioter appeared to punch him while he was on the ground.

One of the two dragged officers can be seen standing up before being mobbed and punched.

Some rioters called on others not to hurt him as the mob led him away.

The Times sent an image to the Metropolitan Police Department of the officer, whose helmet number is clearly visible on video. Dustin Sternbeck, a spokesman for the department, said he did not want to try to identify the officer because many may have put on other officers' helmets.

Sternbeck said he hoped more officers would be able to share their stories with the public soon. "They just feel beaten up," Sternbeck said.

Images circulated by the Metropolitan Police Department show individuals captured on video participating in the attack on the officers at the west-side Capitol door. Metropolitan Police Department

At least four of the individuals who can be seen dragging and beating the officers in the videos reviewed by the Times match images included on a Metropolitan Police list of "persons of interest."

They are suspected of assaulting police officers and could face federal charges.

Christiaan Triebert, Jennifer Valentino-DeVries Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs and Haley Willis contributed reporting.

The New York Times https://nyti.ms/2KlPK6p

Videos show how a rioter was trampled in the stampede at the Capitol.

By Evan Hill, Arielle Ray and Dahlia Kozlowsky

Jan. 16, 2021

Rosanne Boyland, a 34-year-old Trump supporter from Georgia who died during the attack on the Capitol on Jan. 6, appears to have been killed in a crush of fellow rioters during their attempt to fight through a police line, according to videos reviewed by The Times.

The manner of her death had been unclear until The Times discovered that the clothes and backpack strap of a woman in widely circulated videos match those that Ms. Boyland wore in a picture taken of her earlier that day.

The rush that led to Ms. Boyland's death began when rioters, captured on video, massed together in a dangerous crush and attempted to use the weight of their combined bodies to push officers back in a tunnel on the west side of the Capitol, trapping many people in the process.

Even as they first began to push, a rioter could be heard on video warning: "Stop pushing, somebody's going to get hurt."

The Times was able to spot Ms. Boyland on the ground in the hours that follow and subsequent attempts by rioters to resuscitate her and get her medical attention. But she was pronounced dead at a local hospital at 6:09 p.m, according to the Metropolitan Police Department.

Two witnesses, one of whom tried to help her, gave similar accounts of her death.

"By the time that they decided to pick the person up and give them to a police officer, she had blue lips and blood was coming out of her nose," he said on the video. "I don't think that person will be revived."

Evan Hill is a journalist on the Visual Investigations team, which combines traditional reporting with advanced digital forensics. @evanchill

Sidney Powell's Ties to QAnon Movement Explained

newsweek.com/sidney-powell-qanon-voter-fraud-lawsuits-georgia-1552050

Ewan Palmer December 3, 2020

Sidney Powell, the former campaign lawyer for President Donald Trump, has seemingly further cemented her ties to the QAnon movement, while continuing to make unproven claims about the election results.

On Tuesday night, Powell shared a stage at a "Stop the Steal" rally in Georgia alongside her new ally Lin Wood, an attorney who is also representing the alleged Kenosha shooter Kyle Rittenhouse.

The rally caused outrage after Wood suggested Trump supporters abstain from voting in the crucial upcoming Georgia runoffs on January 5 as Republican Senators Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue have "not earned" their support.

"Don't you give it to them. Why would you go back and vote in another rigged election for god's sake! Fix it! You gotta fix it," Wood said.

Wood, who has repeatedly claimed the election was rigged and helped spread misinformation about voter fraud, has the hashtag #WWG1WGA—an abbreviation of the QAnon slogan "where we go one we go all—in his Twitter bio.

On Monday, Powell also cited an affidavit from Ron Watkins, a man with significant ties to the QAnon movement, in her latest lawsuit challenging the election results.

Watkins is the former administrator of the controversial messageboard site 8Kun, originally known as 8Chan. Users of 8Chan emigrated en masse from 4chan, where the base of the QAnon conspiracy theory first appeared in late 2017 as a result of cryptic messages posted there by a mysterious figure known as "Q".

The coded messages or "drops" would be interpreted by QAnon followers to form what would evolve into the radical claims made by the movement involving satanic pedophiles and the "deep state."

Q's messages then began appearing on 8Kun. Despite Q posting thousands of times over the past few years, Q's messages have only been sent three times since Election Day, much to the heartache of many devout QAnon followers.

November 3 also just so happens to be the same day Watkins announced he was stepping down as admin from 8Kun, prompting speculation that he himself is the figure behind QAnon. He denies these claims.

In Powell's lawsuit, Watkins does not directly allege that voter fraud was committed in Georgia. Instead, he states that voting machines "may enable voter fraud by unethical officials," which he believes is "within the realm of possibility."

On Twitter, Watkins has repeatedly pushed claims that Dominion Voting Systems machines used in the election were part of a conspiracy to cost Trump the election.

This is not the first time that Powell has been linked to QAnon.

She rose to prominence as the attorney for former national security advisor Michael Flynn.

The recently pardoned Flynn is seen as a hero in the QAnon movement ever since he took a makeshift oath of office in his backyard that ended with the line "where we go one we go all."

Flynn also has hashtags used by the QAnon movement in his Twitter bio.

In the past, Powell has appeared on QAnon-supporting YouTube shows, as well as frequently retweeting QAnon Twitter accounts.

Powell has also tweeted using the hashtags #TheStormIsComing and #TheStorm—a reference to the moment that QAnon supporters think Trump will start taking down the "deep state" and arrest leading Democrat figures.

Powell's current Twitter profile avatar is a picture of her along with Flynn and a not-so-subtle lightning storm appearing over the White House.

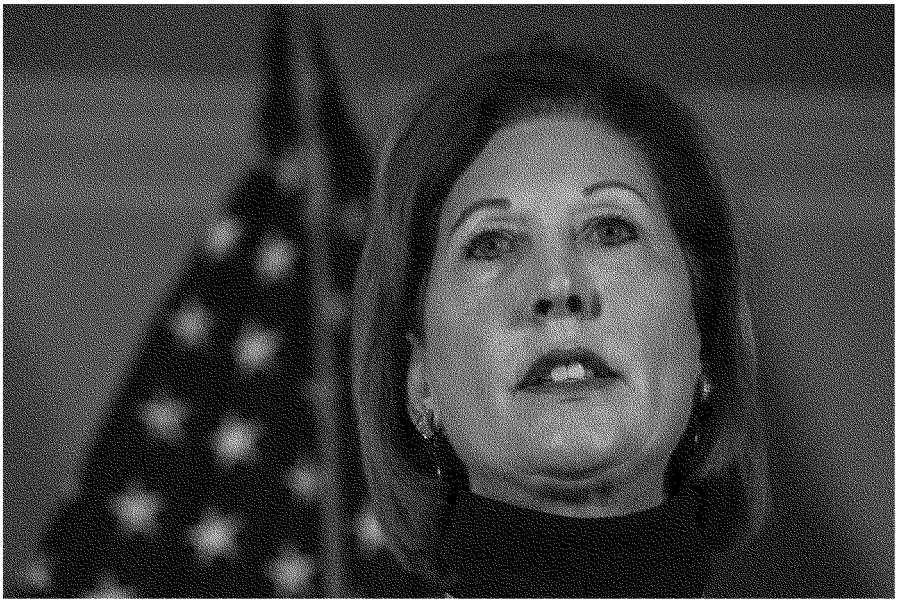
> Michael Flynn's new attorney, Sidney Powell, has repeatedly retweeted major QAnon accounts, including one of the 3 people NBC News reported who helped popularize the conspiracy theory. pic.twitter.com/NErSoX04ex
>
> — Alex Kaplan (@AlKapDC) June 12, 2019

Powell appears to have embraced QAnon's backing of her slogan "release the Kraken." The Kraken was the name given to her lawsuits, which she said would prove fraud was committed in Georgia and Michigan.

The lawsuits were later found to contain a series of typos, repeated debunked claims and no substantial evidence.

Elsewhere, a joint Twitter account between Powell and Wood called @KrakenWood was suspended just a few days after it was created. It is unclear why Twitter suspended the account.

Twitter and Powell have been contacted for comment.



Attorney Sidney Powell speaks to the press about various lawsuits related to the 2020 election, inside the Republican National Committee headquarters on November 19, 2020 in Washington, DC. Drew Angerer/Getty

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FIGHTING HATE FOR GOOD

Extremists and Mainstream Trump Supporters Plan to Protest Congressional Certification of Biden's Victory

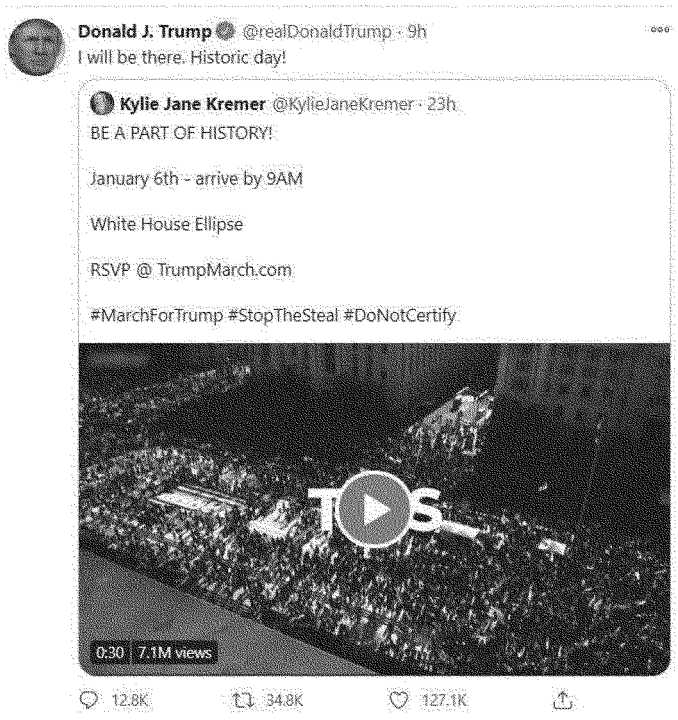


Reuters

Several pro-Trump protests are being organized on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, in Washington, D.C. to express rejection of the November 2020 election results and to pressure Congress to not certify President-Elect Joe Biden's electoral victory. These events—which are being timed to coincide with a joint session of Congress where Electoral College votes will be formally counted—have been encouraged by President Trump in multiple inflammatory tweets urging his supporters to show up in D.C.

Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio was arrested on Monday, January 4, 2021 "on suspicion of burning a Black Lives Matter banner torn from a historic Black church in Washington," according to the New York Times. Tarrio, who was taken into custody shortly after arriving at Washington National airport, announced in late December that he planned to attend January's pro-Trump rallies in Washington. He is expected to be charged with a misdemeanor destruction of property charge for his alleged role in the December 12, 2020 arson, per news reports, and may be released as soon as Monday evening. Tarrio was also charged with two accounts of possession of high-capacity firearm magazines, which were allegedly discovered during the arrest, according to police and the Washington Post.





This collection of protests on January 6 will be the latest major pro-Trump events in D.C. since the election on November 3. Some of the previous protests, including at the November 14 "Million MAGA March" in DC and at rallies on December 12, featured extremists in attendance and violence. Those included incidents in which black churches were vandalized, individuals were assaulted and a degree of chaos ensued.

Various organizers have filed for at least four permits related to the January 6 rallies. These include a Capitol lawn "Stop the Steal/Wild Protest" organized by right-wing provocateur Ali Alexander, a "Trump March" at Freedom Plaza organized by Women for America First, a march led by James Epley of South Carolina from the Mall to the Capitol lawn and a "MAGA Wild" rally organized

by the Eighty Percent Coalition, a reference to a November Gallup poll that found that more than 80% of Republicans do not trust the election results. A fifth event, "Operation Occupy the Capitol" is being promoted on social media, but it is not clear who is promoting the event.

Online chatter among potential attendees has increased in the days leading up to the rally. On "TheDonald.Win" forum, which replaced the banned subreddit "The Donald," users are sharing messages filled with violent rhetoric directed at a wide range of perceived enemies. In response to a user who wondered what happens if Congress ignores "evidence" that President Trump won the election, a user wrote, "Storm the capitol" and another added, "My truck is lifted and I have a plow on it right now. What do you need Mr. President?" In a separate thread about Congress, someone wrote, "Please, I dare them to defy the constitution while millions of patriots are anxiously waiting to hang them and gun them down in the streets like the tyrants they are." Posters also expressed hostility towards law enforcement officers for their role in enforcing gun restrictions. Said one user in a thread about the restrictions, "Travel in packs and do not let them disarm someone without stacking bodies."

Meanwhile, conspiracies about "antifa" activity at the D.C. rally are spreading on social media. These include accusations that antifa plans to infiltrate the ranks of the attendees, as well as allegations that antifa is preparing to intercept "Patriot" convoys heading to D.C. and plan to attack attendees at Metro stations. Photos of construction materials are also being shared, accompanied by the theory that antifa has planted them to use against rally attendees. The rising anti-police sentiment on the far right is also evident in the form of conspiracies alleging that police are "escorting" antifa into D.C.

A range of extremist individuals and groups have promoted the events, and some have announced that they will attend, including agitators such as white

supremacist and Groyper Army leader Nicholas Fuentes and conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, who announced on January 2 that he will attend the "Rally to Save America" at noon on Tuesday, January 5, in Washington, D.C.'s Freedom Plaza. The event will also feature longtime Trump ally Roger Stone.



December 19, 2020 Twitter post by Nicholas Fuentes

On January 4, Fuentes posted a video on DLive tacitly urging followers to kill state legislators, before reversing himself. ""What can you and I do to state legislators?" he asked. "Besides kill them. Although, I'm not advising that, but I mean, what else are you going to do?"

Clashes between attendees and counter-protesters are possible, especially because the Proud Boys may attend the rallies.

Many extremist and mainstream Trump supporters are framing the rallies as a last stand to prevent Biden from being sworn in as the next President, and some chatter indicates that there is a desire to engage in radical and sometimes violent tactics to ensure that the election is not stolen from President Trump. For instance, "Stop the Steal/Wild Protest" organizer Ali Alexander warned in video posted on Twitter on December 27, 2020 that if President Trump tells people not to leave D.C. then he will not leave and he will have truckers sit on the bridges so that no one else can get out.

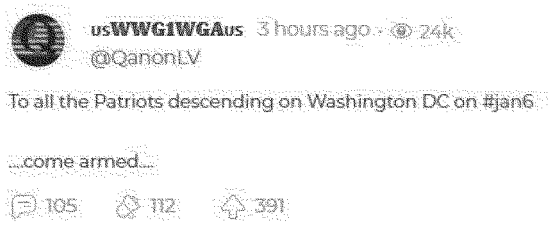


December 27, 2020 Twitter post by Ali Alexander

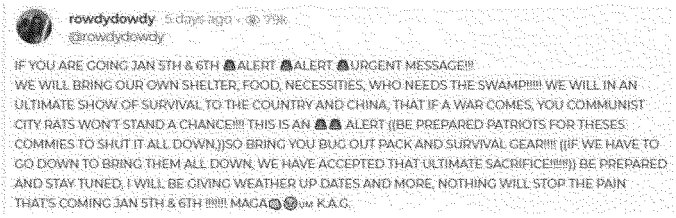
Oath Keepers announced on January 4 that they will have multiple volunteer "security" teams in Washington D.C. on January 5 and 6, 2021. The organization says their members, who may be "undercover" and not identifiable as Oath Keepers, will provide security for speakers, event attendees and Trump supporters as they walk across the city.

Elsewhere in chats frequented by militia members, several militia members insinuated that if nothing is done to prevent Biden's election certification then violence might become necessary. As one user wrote, "The 6th is the line for me. It will change or it will begin." Added another, "I am waiting until the 06 Jan date, then if Trump does nothing...I have a few LEO [law enforcement officer] friends who are going to do some major action and I am joining them."

Protesters who can't travel to Washington have been encouraged to gather at smaller, pro-Trump rallies scheduled for January 5 and 6 in state capitals across the country. A few of the capitals mentioned: Indianapolis, Indiana, Sacramento, California, Lansing, Michigan and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, where former U.S. Rep Matt Shea is scheduled to speak on January 5.



December 30, 2020 Parler post by QAnon profile "WWG1WGA"



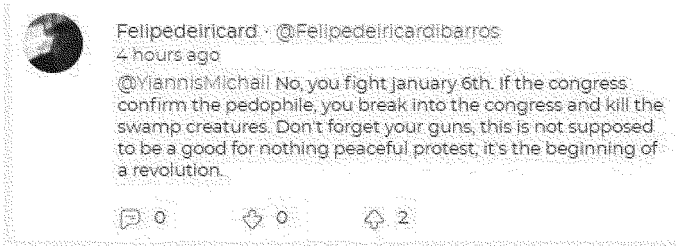
December 29 Parler post by Rowdydowdy

At this time, ADL is not aware of any credible threats of acts of violence that are slated to occur at the January 6 protests. However, if the past is any indication, the combination of an extremist presence at the rallies and the heated nature of the rhetoric suggests that violence is a possibility.

Below are examples of extremists and conspiracy theorists who are promoting the event:

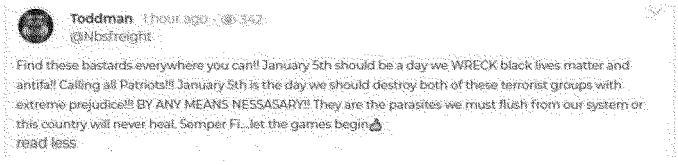
- A member of the white supremacist and antisemitic New Jersey European Heritage Association, forwarded an article on Telegram about President Trump calling for a protest on January 6 with the caption: "Trump calls for protest in DC on Jan 6., says 'be there, will be wild.'" Members of his group attended both previous events.
- Vincent James Foxx, who runs the media entity The Red Elephants which promotes conspiracy theories, anti-Semitic beliefs and white supremacist mantras, shared an advertisement for the protest on Parler.

- Members of America First and the groyper Army—including its leader, white supremacist Nicholas Fuentes—have said that they will be at the rally. Many groypers hold racist and antisemitic views. Fuentes, who holds white supremacist views (but claims not to be a white supremacist), positions the groypers as "Christian conservatives" who oppose immigration (undocumented and legal), globalism, gay and transgender rights, feminism and more. This, however, is a ploy to attract mainstream support and distract from the group's fundamentally white supremacist ideology.
- On January 4, Enrique Tarrio, the head of the Proud Boys, was arrested shortly after arriving in Washington, D.C., after announcing via a December 29 Parler post that the Proud Boys would attend the January 6 protests. The Proud Boys are a nationalistic, Islamophobic, antisemitic, transphobic and misogynistic, and have repeatedly engaged in outright violence on numerous occasions. Members of the Proud Boys attended both previous rallies and each time they were linked with violence that occurred, including Tarrio himself destroying Black Lives Matter signs that were displayed at a black church. Tarrio noted that members of his group will not be wearing their normal black and gold polos, instead going "incognito" as they "spread across downtown DC in smaller teams." Tarrio even suggested that the Proud Boys could wear all black, which is the typical attire for far left antifa members, in a move that could sow confusion and potentially escalate tension in the crowds. In response to one of Tarrio's Parler posts one follower wrote, "No, you fight january 6th. If the congress confirm the pedophile, you break into the congress and kill the swamp creatures. Don't forget your guns, this is not supposed to be a good for nothing peaceful protest, it's the beginning of a revolution."



December 30, 2020 Parler post by Felipedeircard

- QAnon followers are also promoting attendance of the rallies, calling them "the last rally for freedom." One QAnon promoter on Parler with 123k followers wrote, "To all Patriots in Washington D.C. Virginia, MD. Let us know where BLM and Antifa buses are, where they are staying, give us address and pictures. We will send to the Proudboys. We need to get them before they go out to the streets, this will make all the patriots safer at the march..." A follower responded: "Find these bastards everywhere you can! January 5th should be a day we WRECK black lives matter and antifa!! Calling all Patriots!!!! January 6th is the day we should destroy both of these terrorist groups with extreme prejudice!!!! BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY!!"



A comment by "Toddman" in response to a December 30, 2020 Parler post by "QAnon+"

- On several websites frequented by members of the militia movement, supporters—including Three Percenters and Oath Keepers—have said that they are making plans to attend the D.C. rallies both on their own

and in groups. Members of the militia movement garnered attention over the spring and summer for carrying firearms at public rallies (even at times when it was illegal to do so) and attempting to occupy a government building in Michigan. Although it is too early to say definitively what will happen, the consensus appears to be that these groups will adhere to D.C.'s strict laws limiting who can carry. However, some members already have talked about bringing baseball bats.

- On December 19, conspiracy theorist Alex Jones uploaded a video on Banned.Video, a video website owned by Jones, in which he said: "We are going to see 10 million people in Washington, D.C. on January 6 and I'm going to be there." He added: "This election is in the process of being stolen, and President Trump is calling on We the People to take peaceful action in Washington, D.C. by the millions to let the establishment know their tyranny will not stand." Jones previously had urged Trump to call for such action and if needed to occupy D.C. On December 30, a "trailer" for the rally, which includes an image of Kyle Rittenhouse, was uploaded to Banned.Video with the caption, "Call it Stop the Steal, Cancel the Coup or the 2nd American Revolution, you MUST be in Washington, D.C. on 1/6/21. The future of America depends on it."

This post was updated on January 5, 2021

The New York Times https://nyti.ms/3pUnZko

'Senate Being Locked Down': Inside a Harrowing Day at the Capitol

Three New York Times journalists were at the Capitol when it was breached. Here's how they experienced it.

By Nicholas Fandos, Erin Schaff and Emily Cochrane

Published Jan. 7, 2021 Updated Jan. 11, 2021

[Follow our live news on the Capitol Riots.]

WASHINGTON — Something was not right inside the Senate chamber.

Below the press balcony where I stood, looking down on the room like a fishbowl, Vice President Mike Pence had just been rushed out without explanation.

"We do have an emergency," bellowed a police officer with a neon sash who had appeared in the middle of the chamber. Officers and doorkeepers raced around, slamming and locking the immense wooden doors. There were panicked cries for senators to move further into the room.

Senator Mitt Romney, Republican of Utah, threw up his hands in exasperation.

"This is what you've gotten, guys," he yelled, referring to a dozen or so Republican colleagues who were challenging President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s victory, which Congress was meeting to affirm.

Now everything had ground to a halt and I had about 10 seconds to decide whether to run out or get locked in myself. I stayed, deciding I should keep my eyes on the senators I was there to cover, no matter what came next.

"Senate being locked down," I texted my editor.

One minute later: "This is frightening."

Senator Patrick Leahy, an avid amateur photographer, snapped a few frames. Senator Amy Klobuchar blurted out that shots might have been fired. A hush fell over the room and sirens wailed outside.

In an instant, Capitol Police officers began herding the lawmakers down into the well of the Senate and moving them out a back door.

"What about us?" someone near me yelled from the balcony. The police shouted for us to get to the basement.

I dashed to grab my laptop and plunged with a handful of reporters down three floors, where a lone officer held back a pair of doors leading to the Capitol Visitor Center, built after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks as an underground fortress of sorts. It, too, had been breached.

Looking left, we saw a stream of senators snaking out ahead into the narrow subterranean tunnels that connect the sprawling Capitol campus.

There was Senator Mitch McConnell, 78, the majority leader and a polio survivor, practically being carried by his security detail, their hands beneath his arms to steady him as they hustled along. The body man for Senator Chuck Schumer of New York had a firm grasp on his suit behind his neck. Trying to keep the mood light, Senator Roy Blunt from my home state of Missouri teased that perhaps the interruption would speed up the debate.

When we came up above ground, we were in a space I knew well from years of work on Capitol Hill, but officers implored us not to share details of our location. We would be there for about four hours. Later, after the Capitol had been cleared and secured, we retraced our steps, along with staff aides who carried two mahogany boxes containing the Electoral College certificates.

As Congress resumed its count and night turned to early morning, I found myself wandering alone through an eerily silent Capitol, studying the remains of an abandoned occupation. The ornate tiled floors, one of the building's treasures, were coated in a powdery residue of fire extinguishers and pepper spray.

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Sign Up

The window entering the Speaker's Lobby, where I've spent hours cornering lawmakers was shattered. Benches were upturned. Soft drinks littered the halls. On the first floor, I found a handful of syringes and a defibrillator spent on someone — I wondered who — and left behind. —*Nicholas Fandos, congressional reporter*



Trump loyalists incited by President Trump storming into the Capitol building on Wednesday during a joint session of Congress convened to formally tally the results of the election. Erin Schaff/The New York Times

Facing a Mob and Police

I could hear protesters on the first floor of the Senate side of the Capitol, so I went downstairs, following the noise. They came up to the Ohio Clock Corridor just outside the chamber where senators were meeting, and were yelling that they wanted to get in. I was shocked they'd made it inside, and thought this would be the big moment of the day: a small group of protesters having breached the Capitol building.

I was wrong.

I looked down the hall to the Rotunda and saw what looked like a hundred people running around, yelling and pulling around a podium. I took a bunch of photos and then went to the ceremonial doors to the Rotunda, where a single police officer guarded the door against a throng of hundreds outside.

The mob massed together and rushed the officer, forcing open the door, and people flooded in. I ran upstairs to be out of the way of the crowd, and to get a better vantage point to document what was happening. Suddenly, two or three men in black surrounded me and demanded to know who I worked for.

The Capitol was placed on lockdown on Wednesday after hundreds of extremist protesters swarmed in. Erin Schaff/The New York Times

Grabbing my press pass, they saw that my ID said The New York Times and became really angry. They threw me to the floor, trying to take my cameras. I started screaming for help as loudly as I could. No one came. People just watched. At this point, I thought I could be killed and no one would stop them. They ripped one of my cameras away from me, broke a lens on the other and ran away.

After that I was hyperventilating, unsure of what to do. I knew I needed to get away from the mob and hide my broken camera so I wouldn't be targeted again. I ran into Speaker Nancy Pelosi's suite, but people were vandalizing her office, so I kept moving. Walking out to her balcony facing west toward the National Mall, I saw a mass of people covering the inaugural stage. I found a spot to hide my camera in there, then stood watching the crowd from the balcony and filming from my phone, which was all I had left.

"This will be the start of a civil war revolution," a man next to me said.

At that point, the Capitol Police had started deploying pepper spray or tear gas, and I knew I needed to find a place to hide. I didn't know where I could go since I no longer had my congressional credentials. I ran to the third floor, opened the first door I saw and hid in a hallway. I called my husband, who told me to stay calm and find a safer spot.

But then the police found me. I told them that I was a photojournalist and that my pass had been stolen, but they didn't believe me. They drew their guns, pointed them and yelled at me to get down on my hands and knees. As I lay on the ground, two other photojournalists came into the hall and started shouting "She's a journalist!"

The officers told us it wasn't safe to leave, and helped us find a room to barricade ourselves in. The two other photographers grabbed my hands and told me it would be OK, and to stay with them so they could vouch for me. I'll never forget their kindness in that moment. *—Erin Schaff, staff photographer*

Sheltering in the House

A little after 2:15 p.m., aides in the House chamber began quietly warning us to prepare to take shelter. I thought about how stupid I was to have left my bag at my desk on the opposite end of the Capitol, and asked to borrow someone's computer charger just in case.

I watched as a security detail rushed Representative Steny Hoyer of Maryland, the majority leader, off the floor along with other members of leadership. Police officers began to shut the gallery doors.

"We now have individuals that have breached the Capitol building," said a Capitol Police officer who had stepped up to the rostrum. Remain inside and calm, he instructed.

I just kept updating my story, needing something to keep me distracted. Lawmakers were yelling. It didn't feel real.

Tear gas had been deployed in the Rotunda, an officer said, and everyone needed to grab an emergency hood from under his or her chair and prepare to put it on.

Suddenly, it seemed as if every lawmaker had a duffel bag in hand, pulling out aluminum bags and emergency hoods, and staff members were distributing them out to reporters.

You could hear banging outside, so I crouched behind a desk, the reality of the chamber being breached sinking in. I ripped at the bag, struggling to pull out the hood, a sort of hybrid gas mask with a tarp, which made a loud whirring noise and had a flashing red light. I peeked over the desk and could see Representative Ruben Gallego, Democrat of Arizona and a veteran, jacketless, standing on a chair and yelling instructions on how to use the masks.

People banged on glass windows, crowds charged past the front columns, and others used poles to batter an entrance to the building on Wednesday. Erin Schaff/The New York Times

Officers hauled a huge wooden chest as a makeshift barricade in front of the main doors to the House chamber — the ones Vice President Mike Pence had just walked through, the ones through which they had carried the chests with the elector certificates. The floor was empty, except for staff aides yelling at everyone in the gallery to get out.

I grabbed my laptop, my phone and this whirring hood, clutched it all to my chest, and clambered up to the back of the gallery where a line was forming to leave the chamber. There was a banister separating the area into sections and we struggled to climb over. What's faster? Ducking under? Climbing over? As I plotted my escape, I heard shouts of "Get down!" Everyone dropped to the floor.

Face down behind an auditorium chair, I could see a few officers with guns drawn at the barricaded chamber doors. Representative Markwayne Mullin, Republican of Oklahoma, was trying to reason with whomever was banging on the door. I started thinking about how I really wasn't shielded behind this chair. Was it worth scuttling down a few steps to see if the TV equipment provided more cover? But then would I be more exposed if people started shooting? I stayed put.

I sent a few "I love you" texts, otherwise frozen on the ground. I didn't know what might happen. I just wanted them to know. —*Emily Cochrane, congressional reporter*

UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

FBI Phoenix Field Office
30 May 2019
[redacted]

(U//LES) Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories Very Likely Motivate Some Domestic Extremists to Commit Criminal, Sometimes Violent Activity

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(U) Domestic extremists employ a number of indicators, some of which may be criminal and others which may constitute the exercise of rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the US Constitution. The FBI is prohibited from engaging in investigative activity for the sole purpose of monitoring the exercise of constitutional rights.

(U//FOUO) The FBI assesses anti-government, identity based, and fringe political conspiracy theories[a, b] very likely[c] motivate some domestic extremists, wholly or in part, to commit criminal and sometimes violent activity. The FBI further assesses in some cases these conspiracy theories very likely encourage the targeting of specific people, places, and organizations, thereby increasing the likelihood of violence against these targets. These assessments are made with high confidence,[d] based on information from other law enforcement agencies, open source information, court documents, human sources with varying degrees of access and corroboration, and FBI investigations.

(U//FOUO) One key assumption driving these assessments is that certain conspiracy theory narratives tacitly support or legitimize violent action. The FBI also assumes some, but not all individuals or domestic extremists who hold such beliefs will act on them. The FBI assesses these conspiracy theories very likely will emerge, spread, and evolve in the modern information marketplace, occasionally driving both groups and individual extremists to carry out criminal or violent acts. Indicators that may lead to revised judgements or cause a change in the confidence level associated with this assessment include a lack of conspiracy theory-driven criminal or violent activity in the near to long term or significant efforts by major social media companies and websites to remove, regulate, or counter potentially harmful conspiratorial content.

[a] (U) See Appendix A: Defining Conspiracy Theories.
[b] (U) For an explanation of these terms and a description of all conspiracy theories referenced in this intelligence bulletin, see Appendix B: Prominent Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories.
[c] (U) See Appendix C: Expressions of Likelihood.
[d] (U) See Appendix D: Confidence in Assessments and Judgments Based on a Body of Information.

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(U) Source Summary Statement

(U//FOUO) This intelligence bulletin draws upon a wide body of reporting derived from other law enforcement agencies, open source information, documentary sources, human source reporting with varying degrees of access, and FBI investigations from 15 January 2008 to 30 January 2019. Reporting from other law enforcement agencies and open source information was deemed the most critical in supporting the key analytic judgements in this paper. News articles provided contextual details of various incidents and background on specific conspiracy theories not contained in law enforcement reporting, while academic publications aided in clearly defining the topic, limiting the scope of the paper, and developing the key analytic judgments. Documentary sources consisting of plea agreements, a Court of Appeals Opinion, a criminal complaint, and an indictment provided additional details concerning the incidents discussed, including the charges brought against the perpetrators and, in some cases, the conspiracy theory-based motives of their actions. The use of reporting derived from human sources and FBI investigations was limited, although these sources did provide intelligence that corroborated open source information. Human sources included an established human source with indirect access, much of whose reporting since 2014 has been corroborated, a liaison source with indirect access, a limited history of reporting, and extensive knowledge of domestic extremist groups throughout the United States, and a member of the public with indirect access, reporting for the first time, and whose reliability cannot be determined. The intelligence encompassed within this intelligence bulletin was collected between 1 November 2013 and 30 January 2019 and is current as of 31 January 2019.

(U//LES) Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories Very Likely Motivate Some Domestic Extremists to Commit Criminal or Violent Activity

(U//LES) The FBI assesses anti-government, identity based, and fringe political conspiracy theories very likely motivate some domestic extremists, wholly or in part, to engage in criminal or violent activity. This assessment is based on events in which individuals committed crimes, plotted attacks, or successfully carried out deadly violence and who—either before or after their arrests—attributed their actions to their conspiratorial beliefs. These events include instances in which the perpetrators intended to kill groups identified by such theories as hostile and malevolent, or to simply carry out dangerous, unlawful acts in an effort to draw attention to or expose a perceived conspiracy.

- (U//LES) On 19 December 2018, a California man was arrested after being found in possession of bomb making materials with the intent to construct an explosive device, according to information obtained from a law enforcement agency.[1] According to information obtained from a separate law enforcement agency, the individual stated he planned to travel to Springfield, Illinois and blow up a satanic temple monument at the Illinois Capitol rotunda in order to "make Americans aware of 'Pizzagate' and the New World Order (NWO), who were dismantling society."[2]

- (U//FOUO) On 27 October 2018, an identified individual killed 11 people and injured several others at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, according to a criminal complaint filed in US District Court.[3] According to a copy of his social media postings obtained via open source, shortly before the attack the individual reposted a cartoon depicting the Zionist Occupation Government conspiracy theory and stated that

the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society "likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in."[4]

- (U//FOUO) On 15 June 2018, a Nevada man used an armored truck to block traffic on the Hoover Dam Bypass Bridge, held up signs conveying a political demand, then fled into Arizona where he was arrested by Arizona Department of Public Safety, who found body armor, rifles, ammunition, and a flash-bang device inside his vehicle, according to law enforcement information.[5] According to a technical source with direct access, the man referenced the QAnon conspiracy theory directly and discussed related conspiratorial beliefs after his arrest.[6] According to an online news source deemed reliable, he sent letters from jail containing a distinctive QAnon slogan to President Trump and other officials claiming he wanted to expose government corruption and lies.[7]

- (U) On 27 October 2016, two men were arrested in Georgia on drug charges and found to be stockpiling weapons, ammunition, and other tactical gear in preparation to attack the government-funded research facility in Alaska known as the High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP), according to information obtained from another law enforcement agency.[8] According to subject interviews by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), the men became upset after watching videos online about the imposition of martial law and other government conspiracies.[9, 10] One of the men, who claimed the government was using HAARP to control the weather and prevent humans from talking to God, also made references to the United Nations (UN) invading America and sacrifices occurring at a New World Order church, according to the same source.[11]

- (U//FOUO) On 1 November 2013, an identified individual shot and killed one Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officer and wounded several others at Los Angeles International Airport, according to an FBI investigation.[12] Before the attack, the individual wrote a letter expressing his desire to kill TSA personnel, who he associated with the New World Order, according to a plea agreement filed in US District Court.[13]

(U//LES) Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories Very Likely Encourage the Targeting of Specific People, Places, and Organizations

(U//LES) The FBI assesses in some cases anti-government, identity based, and fringe political conspiracy theories very likely encourage the targeting of specific people, places, and organizations, thereby increasing the risk of extremist violence against such targets. This assessment is based on several incidents where individuals threatened, assaulted, or plotted to attack entities they perceived as being linked to or involved with an alleged conspiracy. This targeting occurs when promoters of conspiracy theories, claiming to act as "researchers" or "investigators", single out people, businesses, or groups which they falsely accuse of being involved in the imagined scheme. These targets are then subjected to harassment campaigns and threats by supporters of the theory, and become vulnerable to violence or other dangerous acts.

- (U//LES) On 29 May 2018, the leader of an unofficial, local veterans aid group claimed to have discovered a child sex trafficking camp on privately owned land in Tucson, Arizona, according to two news sources of unknown reliability.[14, 15] After local law

enforcement investigations discredited the claim, the leader repeatedly alleged a law enforcement cover up and referenced the QAnon conspiracy theory as he and armed group members searched for additional camps, according to multiple sources with varying degrees of access.[16, 17, 18, 19, 20] In addition, the leader and his supporters accused specific residents, businesses, and local officials of aiding or participating in child sex trafficking, according to two sources with indirect access.[21, 22, 23] The group also harassed, threatened, and doxed critics and opponents, according to multiple sources with varying degrees of access,[24, 25, 26, 27, 28] and engaged in criminal activities, according to an indictment filed in an Arizona county superior court.[29]

- (U) Following the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, conspiracy theorists who believed the shooting was a government hoax harassed and threatened family members of the slain victims, who they believed to be complicit, according to two online new sources deemed reliable.[30, 31] According to an FBI investigation, a Florida woman was arrested and sentenced in 2017 for sending death threats to a victim's father, [32, 33] and a Brooklyn, New York man was arrested in November 2015 after harassing another victim's daughter and fleeing from police, according to an online news source of unknown reliability.[34]

- (U) On 4 December 2016, a North Carolina man was arrested in Washington, DC after he entered the Comet Ping Pong pizza restaurant carrying an AR-15 rifle and a .38 revolver, fired shots at a locked closet door, and aimed his rifle at an employee. The man was motivated by the Pizzagate conspiracy theory, alleging that a child sex-trafficking ring involving nationally known political figures was operating from inside the restaurant, according to a plea agreement filed in US District Court.[35]

- (U) On 10 April 2015, a Tennessee man was arrested for plotting to attack an Islamic community near Hancock, New York known as Islamberg, according to an FBI investigation.[36] According to a US Court of Appeals Opinion, inaccurate news reporting about Islamberg had surfaced in recent years, including a story suggesting the community supported terrorism. The man became obsessed with Islamberg, believing that its residents were plotting to attack New York City, and in February 2015 he began attempts to recruit others to join his attack.[37]

(U) Perspective

(U) Although conspiracy theory-driven crime and violence is not a new phenomenon, today's information environment has changed the way conspiracy theories develop, spread, and evolve. The advent of the Internet and social media has enabled promoters of conspiracy theories to produce and share greater volumes of material via online platforms that larger audiences of consumers can quickly and easily access.[38, 39] Based on the increased volume and reach of conspiratorial content due to modern communication methods, it is logical to assume that more extremist-minded individuals will be exposed to potentially harmful conspiracy theories, accept ones that are favorable to their views, and possibly carry out criminal or violent actions as a result. The Internet has also enabled a 'crowd-sourcing' effect wherein conspiracy theory followers themselves shape a given theory by presenting information that supplements, expands,

or localizes its narrative. The examples above demonstrate how crowd-sourced conspiracy theories can influence which entities extremists choose to target. These examples also substantiate concerns expressed by some researchers who believe a rise of conspiracism, fostered in part by the Internet, may be accompanied by a search for scapegoats—those believed to be the conspirators' allies, henchmen, or collaborators.[40]

(U//FOUO) This is the first FBI product examining the threat from conspiracy theory-driven domestic extremists and provides a baseline for future intelligence products.

(U) Analysis of Alternatives

(U//FOUO) The FBI considered the alternative hypothesis that domestic extremists likely turn to violence only as a result of an underlying extremist ideology (such as militia extremism or white racially motivated violent extremism), whereas conspiracy beliefs held by such extremists do not play a role in their mobilization to violence. The FBI deemed this alternative to be less likely because these conspiracy beliefs have motivated, at least in part, several high profile violent acts, or have influenced the perpetrators—to the extent that they attributed their actions to their conspiratorial beliefs before or after their arrests. In addition, academic research indicates conspiracy beliefs are not only prevalent and influential in domestic extremist circles and among those with extreme political views, but often serve to magnify and exacerbate existing extremist sentiments. One indicator that would increase the likelihood of this alternative hypothesis is the absence or decrease in incidents over the long term in which domestic extremists engage in violent acts on the basis of their conspiracy beliefs.

(U) Outlook

(U//FOUO) The FBI assesses anti-government, identity based, and fringe political conspiracy theories very likely will emerge, spread, and evolve in the modern information marketplace over the near term, fostering anti-government sentiment, promoting racial and religious prejudice, increasing political tensions, and occasionally driving both groups and individuals to commit criminal or violent acts. Because some conspiracy theories are highly partisan in nature, political developments, including those surrounding major election cycles such as the 2020 presidential election, likely will impact the direction of these conspiracy theories and the potential activities of extremists who subscribe to them over the long term. Another factor driving the intensity of conspiracy theorizing in the United States, and the subsequent threat from conspiracy-minded extremists, is the uncovering of real conspiracies or cover-ups involving illegal, harmful, or unconstitutional activities by government officials or leading political figures. Indicators that these scenarios are emerging include disrupted plots or successful attacks against popular conspiracy theory targets, such as government facilities, synagogues, mosques, or partisan political figures. Additionally, reports of a sudden rise in threats and unfounded accusations against a given individual or business may indicate impending conspiracy theory-driven crime or violence.

(U) Intelligence Requirements

(U) FBI National Standing Collection Requirements

- (U//FOUO) USA-TERR-CTD-SR-0711-18
- (U//FOUO) USA-TERR-CTD-SR-0401-16

(U) This intelligence bulletin was prepared by the Phoenix Field Office of the FBI. Comments and queries may be addressed to the Phoenix Field Office Field Intelligence Group at [redacted]

(U) Appendix A: Defining Conspiracy Theories

(U) Although many conspiracy theories appear benign or inconsequential, others create serious risks. Throughout history, such conspiracy theories have fueled prejudice, witch-hunts, genocide, and acts of terrorism.[e] In the context of domestic terrorism, extremists often view the activities of alleged conspirators as an existential threat that can only be stopped through drastic, or even violent means. The definitions and notes below are meant to inform discussions within law enforcement as they relate to potentially harmful conspiracy theories and domestic extremism.

(U) A *conspiracy theory* is an attempt to explain events or circumstances as the result of a group of actors working in secret to benefit themselves at the expense of others.[f] Conspiracy theories typically allege wrongdoing by powerful others (for example, public officials, business executives, scientists) or societally marginalized groups (for example, Muslims, Jews), and are most prevalent among individuals with extreme political views.[g] Some conspiracy theories point to weak circumstantial evidence, but ignore stronger evidence that would refute their claims.[h, i] Consequently, they are usually at odds with official or prevailing explanations of events.[j] While a conspiracy theory refers to an allegation that may or may not be true, a *conspiracy* is a true causal chain of events. Real conspiracies involving illegal, antidemocratic, or harmful activities by high-level government officials and political elites have been exposed in the past and it has been argued that such plots have encouraged conspiracism in society.[k]

(U) Relying on the premises that nothing happens by accident, nothing is as it seems, and everything is connected, conspiracy theorists tend to view every bad outcome as the result of an intentional decision by an evil actor, dismiss disconfirming evidence as "fabricated" by the conspirators, and connect a wide range of seemingly unrelated occurences to suggest a larger plot.[l] Despite sharing key characteristics and at times featuring similar themes and intersecting plots, conspiracy theories vary greatly in their scope. Some are narrowly focused on a particular event or set of events whereas others suggest broad, expansive narratives that link multiple conspiracies in complex ways to portray a group of evil actors working to manipulate society on a global scale.

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[e] (U) Journal article; Advances in Political Psychology; "Understanding Conspiracy Theories"; 20 March 2019; p. 3; Journal is a peer reviewed academic journal. Author received pre-publication version of article on 30 January 2019.
[f] (U) Book; *American Conspiracy Theories*; 2014; p. 32; The authors are associate professors of political science at the University of Miami.
[g] (U) Journal article; Social Psychological and Personality Science, Volume 6, Issue 5; "Political Extremism Predicts Belief in Conspiracy Theories"; 12 January 2015; pp. 570-578; Journal is a peer-reviewed academic journal that covers research in social and personality psychology.
[h] (U) Paper; American Political Science Association Annual Meeting; "The Determinants of Belief in Conspiracy Theories"; 30 August 2012; p. 5; The American Political Science Association is a professional organization of scholars and researchers in the field of political science.
[i] (U) Working paper; George Washington University Program on Extremism; "Conspiracy Theories in the Patriot/Militia Movement"; May 2017; pp. 13-14; The George Washington University Program on Extremism provides analysis on issues related to violent and non-violent extremism.
[j] (U) Journal article; Diogenes, Volume 1, Issue 7; "Conspiracy Theories as Stigmatized Knowledge"; 25 October 2016; p. 2; Diogenes is a peer reviewed academic journal that publishes papers in the field of philosophy and the humanities.
[k] Book; *Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy, World War I to 9/11*; 2009; pp. 1-12; The author is a professor of history at the University of California, Davis.
[l] Book; *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America*; 2003; pp. 3-4, 6; The author is a leading expert on the subject and a professor of political science at Syracuse University.

(U) Appendix B: Prominent Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories

(U) The conspiracy theories referenced in this intelligence bulletin have been categorized as anti-government, identity based, or fringe political because they assert secretive, malevolent acts either by an allegedly hostile and tyrannical federal government, by racial, religious, or social minority groups, or by political opponents.

Anti-Government

(U) *NWO:* A group of international elites controls governments, industry, and media organizations, instigates major wars, carries out secret staged events, and manipulates economies with the goal of establishing global rule.[m]

(U) *UN:* The UN is being used by an evil global cabal to erode American sovereignty, strip away individual liberties, and bring foreign troops to American soil in order to replace democracy with global tyranny.[n]

(U) *False Flags:* The official story surrounding a given terrorist attack or mass shooting is a lie; the event was staged or conducted by the government to justify encroachments on civil liberties.[o]

Identity Based

(U) *Zionist Occupied Government:* Jewish agents secretly control the governments of Western states and are conspiring to achieve world domination.[p]

(U) *Islamberg*: The small Muslim community near Hancock, New York known as Islamberg is a terrorist training camp; its residents, who pose as peaceful Muslims, are in fact Islamic radicals operating as a terrorist sleeper cell.[q]

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[m] (U) Website; Wikipedia.com; List of Conspiracy Theories; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_conspiracy_theories; accessed on 26 February 2019; Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia with user generated articles whose reliability cannot be determined.
[n] (U) Working paper; George Washington University Program on Extremism; "Conspiracy Theories in the Patriot/Militia Movement"; May 2017; pp. 9-10; The George Washington University Program on Extremism provides analysis on issues related to violent and non-violent extremism.
[o] (U) Research paper; Demos; "The Power of Unreason: Conspiracy Theories, Extremism, and Counterterrorism"; 29 August 2010; p. 45; Demos is a think-tank based in the United Kingdom with a cross-party political viewpoint.
[p] (U) Website; Wikipedia.com; List of Conspiracy Theories; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_conspiracy_theories; accessed on 26 February 2019; Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia with user generated articles whose reliability cannot be determined.
[q] (U) Online news article; nytimes.com; "They Created a Muslim Enclave in Upstate N.Y. Then Came the Online Conspiracies."; 28 January 2019; https://www nytimes.com/2019/01/28/nyregion/islamberg-ny-attack-plot html; accessed on 25 February 2019; The New York Times is a national daily newspaper.

Fringe Political

(U) *Pizzagate:* High ranking democratic officials are or were involved in a child sex trafficking ring centered at the Comet Ping Pong pizza restaurant in Washington, DC.[r]

(U) *QAnon:* An anonymous government official known as "Q" posts classified information online to reveal a covert effort, led by President Trump, to dismantle a conspiracy involving "deep state" actors and global elites allegedly engaged in an international child sex trafficking ring.[s]

[r] (U) Online news article; Snopes; "The Roots of 'Pedophile Ring' Conspiracy Theories"; 2 September 2018; https://www.snopes.com/news/2018/09/02/roots-pedophile-ring-conspiracy-theories/; accessed on 4 January 2019; Snopes is the oldest and largest fact-checking site on the Internet.
[s] (U) Online news article; Snopes; "The Roots of 'Pedophile Ring' Conspiracy Theories"; 2 September 2018; https://www.snopes.com/news/2018/09/02/roots-pedophile-ring-conspiracy-theories/; accessed on 4 January 2019; Snopes is the oldest and largest fact-checking site on the Internet.

(U) Appendix C: Expressions of Likelihood

(U) Phrases such as "the FBI judges" and "the FBI assesses," and terms such as "likely" and "probably" convey analytical judgments and assessments. The chart below approximates how expressions of likelihood and probability correlate with percentages of chance. Only terms of likelihood should appear in FBI products; the chart includes terms of probability strictly for comparison, as they sometimes appear in reporting of other government agencies. Furthermore, the FBI does not arrive at judgments through statistical analysis; and will not use terms of probability to convey uncertainty in external FBI intelligence products.

UNCLASSIFIED

Terms of Likelihood	Almost No Chance	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Roughly Even Chance	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain(ly)
Terms of Probability	Remote	Highly Improbable	Improbable (Improbably)	Roughly Even Odds	Probable (Probably)	Highly Probable	Nearly Certain
	1-5%	5-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%

(U) Appendix D: Confidence in Assessments and Judgments Based on a Body of Information

(U) Confidence levels reflect the quality and quantity of the source information supporting a judgment. Consequently, the FBI ascribes high, medium, or low levels of confidence to assessments, as follows:

(U) **High confidence** generally indicates the FBI's judgments are based on high quality information from multiple sources. High confidence in a judgment does not imply the assessment is a fact or a certainty; such judgments might be wrong. While additional reporting and information sources may change analytical judgments, such changes are most likely to be refinements and not substantial in nature.

(U) **Medium confidence** generally means the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence. Additional reporting or information sources have the potential to increase the FBI's confidence levels or substantively change analytical judgments.

(U) **Low confidence** generally means the information's credibility or plausibility is uncertain, the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make solid analytic inferences, or the reliability of the sources is questionable. Absent additional reporting or information sources, analytical judgments should be considered preliminary in nature.

(U) Endnotes

[1] (U//LES) FBI; Case Information; 15 January 2019; 19 December 2018; "(U//LES) The Seaside PD reported they arrested [Name withheld] for possession of materials with intent to make a destructive device. [Name withheld] said he planned to build a bomb and traveling to Springfield, IL to blow up a satanic temple monument being displayed in the Illinois Capitol rotunda"; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a [Name withheld] assessment containing information from another law enforcement agency.

[2] (U) FBI; Case Information; 28 December 2018; 19 December 2018; "(U) The Seaside PD reported arresting [Name withheld] for possession of materials with the intent to make a destructive device"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is a [Name withheld] assessment containing information from another law enforcement agency.

[3] (U) FBI; Case Information; 28 October 2018; 27 October 2018; "[TITLE REDACTED]"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source [Name withheld] is the criminal complaint issued out of the Western District of Pennsylvania.

[4] (U) Website; Archive.today Webpage Capture; [TITLE REDACTED]; 27 October 2018; https://archive.fo/k63LE; accessed on 3 January 2019; Source is a text and graphical copy of [Name withheld] social media profile.

[5] (U) FBI; Case Information; 22 June 2018; 15 June 2018; "[TITLE REDACTED]"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is a [Name withheld] assessment containing incident reports from Arizona Department of Public Safety (AZDPS) and Nevada Highway Patrol.

[6] (U//FOUO) FBI; Case Information; 22 June 2018; 15 June 2018; "[TITLE REDACTED]"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is a [Name withheld] assessment containing a supplemental report by AZDPS with partial transcripts of subject's jail calls, obtained through subpoena to the Mohave County Jail.

[7] (U) Online news article; Reviewjournal.com; "Suspect in Hoover Dam standoff writes Trump, cites conspiracy in letters"; 13 July 2018; https://www.reviewjournal.com/crime/courts/suspect-in-hoover-dam-standoff-writes-trump-cites-conspiracy-in-letters/; accessed on 28 January 2019; The Las Vegas Review-Journal is a major daily newspaper. Reporting in the article is based on statements from the subject's attorney, court records, and letters written by the subject.

[8] (U) FBI; Case Information; 16 November 2017; 27 October 2016; "(U) Coffee County Sheriff's Office Police Report - [Name withheld] (Part 1 of 2)"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is a police report provided by the Coffee County Sheriff's Office.

[9] (U) FBI; Case Information; 2 December 2016; 27 September 2016; "(U) Interview of [Name withheld] by ATF"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is an investigative report from the ATF summarizing a custodial interview with [Name withheld].

[10] (U) FBI; Case Information; 2 December 2016; 27 October 2016; "(U) Interview of [Name withheld] by ATF"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is an investigative report from the ATF summarizing a custodial interview with [Name withheld].

[11] (U) FBI; Case Information; 2 December 2016; 27 October 2016; "(U) Interview of [Name withheld] by ATF"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is an investigative report from the ATF summarizing a custodial interview with [Name withheld].

[12] (U//FOUO) FBI; Case Information; 2 January 2018; 1 November 2013; "(U//FOUO) Timeline of Events - LAX Terminal 3"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is a timeline of events compiled from multiple sources including surveillance video, telephone call recordings, police radio communications, interviews, and other FBI data.

[13] (U) FBI; Case Information; 15 September 2016; 1 September 2016; "(U) Guilty plea in captioned case"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is the plea agreement between [Name withheld] and the United States Attorney's Office for the Central District of California.

[14] (U) Online news article; Tucsonnewsnow.com; "[Name withheld] discovers disturbing abandoned camp in Tucson"; 31 May 2018; https://www.tucsonnewsnow.com/story/38322543/[Name withheld]-abandoned-camp-tucson/; accessed on 4 January 2019; Tucsonnewsnow.com is the official website for KOLD News 13, a local news channel. The article is based on reporting from associates of [Name withheld] with direct access.

[15] (U) Online news article; 12news.com; "VERIFY: Is there a child sex camp in Tucson?"; 8 June 2018; https://www.12news.com/article/news/local/arizona/verify-is-there-a-child-sex-camp-in-tucson/75-562768168; accessed on 24 January 2019; 12News.com is the official website for KPNX Channel 12, a television station

covering Arizona-related news. The article is based on videos from the [Names withheld] page and statements from a Pima County Sheriff's Department spokesperson.

[16] (U) Website; [Name withheld]; 4 June 2018; https://www.[Name withheld].com/TucsonPoliceDepartment/posts/1015554520845853 1; accessed on 24 January 2019; Source is a social media page associated with the Tucson Police Department.

[17] (U) Online news article; hcn.org; "Conspiracy theories inspire vigilante justice in Tucson"; 12 September 2018; https://www.hcn.org/issues/50.17/politics-conspiracy-theories-inspire-vigilante-justice-in-tucson; accessed on 25 January 2019; High Country News is an independent non-profit news media source covering issues facing the Western United States. Reporting in the article is based on statements from local law enforcement employees with direct access, interviews with members of [Name withheld] and with other members of the public with direct access.

[18] (U) Website; [Name withheld]; 17 January 2019; https://www.[Names withheld] status/1086090064323440640; accessed on 25 January 2019; Source is a social media page associated with [Name withheld].

[19] (U) Online news article; Motherboard.vice.com; "#QANON Conspiracy Theorists Are Hunting for 'Child Sex Camps' in the Arizona Desert"; 7 June 2018; https://www motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/zm8ww8/qanon-conspiracy-theorists-are-hunting-for-child-sex-camps-in-the-arizona-desert; accessed on 25 January 2019; Motherboard is a multimedia publication owned by Vice Media and focusing on stories related to technology and science. Reporting in the article is based on statements from a Tucson Police Department representative, other local and national news reporting, and videos and posts from the [Names withheld] page.

[20] (U) FBI; Case Information; 24 October 2018; 11 August 2018; "[TITLE REDACTED]"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is an officer from another law enforcement agency.

[21] (U) FBI; Case Information; 6 July 2018; 28 June 2018; "(U) RE: E-Mail regarding [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a liaison contact with indirect access, whose reporting is limited and some of whose reporting has been corroborated.

[22] (U) FBI; Case Information; 5 July 2018; 5 July 2018; "(U) Information on [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a liaison contact with indirect access, whose reporting is limited and some of whose reporting has been corroborated.

[23] (U) FBI; Case Information; 30 July 2018; 23 July 2018; "[TITLE REDACTED]"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is an established source with indirect access to the information, much of whose reporting has been corroborated.

[24] (U//FOUO) FBI; Case Information; 9 August 2018; 9 August 2018; "(U//FOUO) Threats Made by [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is a screen capture of a comment posted to social media by user [Name withheld].

[25] (U) FBI; Case Information; 6 July 2018; 23 June 2018; "[TITLED REDACTED]"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a member of the public with indirect access who shared the information with the Pima County Sheriff's Department.

[26] (U) FBI; Case Information; 30 July 2018; 15 July 2018; "(U) Conversion to Full Investigation: [Name withheld]; AOT - DT Militia Extremism"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is screen captures of social media posts, online videos, and documents from other websites relating to the dox of local law enforcement officials .

[27] (U//FOUO) FBI; Case Information; 26 September 2018; 20 September 2018; "(U//FOUO) Threats made by [Name withheld] toward FBI"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is a video posted to social media websites containing threats made by [Name withheld] toward the FBI.

[28] (U) FBI; Case Information; 18 October 2018; 15 October 2018; "[TITLED REDACTED]"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; An established source with indirect access to the information, much of whose reporting has been corroborated.

[29] (U//FOUO) FBI; Case Information; 27 September 2018; 19 September 2018; "(U//FOUO) Pima County Superior Court Indictment"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is the Pima County Superior Court Indictment of [Name withheld] and associates for criminal trespass and burglary charges.

[30] (U) Online news article; latimes.com; "In an age of 'alternative facts,' a massacre of schoolchildren is called a hoax"; 3 February 2017; https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-sandy-hook-conspiracy-20170203-story html;

accessed on 4 January 2019; The Los Angeles Times is a national daily newspaper. Reporting in the article is based on statements from the father of a Sandy Hook victim and a letter to the White House from Newtown residents.
[31] (U) Online news article; TheGuardian.com; "Sandy Hook father [Name withheld] on death threats: "I never imagined I'd have to fight for my child's legacy"; 2 May 2017; https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/may/02/sandy-hook-school-hoax-massacre-conspiracists-victim-father; accessed on 4 January 2019; TheGuardian.com is a British news and media website. Reporting in the article is based on an interview with the father of a Sandy Hook victim, a letter from the Newtown school board to the White House, and statements from [Names withheld].
[32] (U) FBI; Case Information; 3 April 2017; 3 April 2017; "(U) Arrest of [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is the arrest warrant for [Name withheld].
[33] (U) FBI; Case Information; 21 June 2017; 7 June 2017; "(U) Sentencing of [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is an FBI agent who was present at [Name withheld] sentencing hearing in US District Court for the Southern District of Florida.
[34] (U) Online news article; ctpost.com; "Sandy Hook 'truther' gets suspended sentence"; 18 April 2016; https://www.ctpost.com/policereports/article/Sandy-Hook-truther-gets-suspended-sentence-7255482.php; accessed on 7 January 2019; Ctpost.com is the official website for The Connecticut Post, a daily newspaper located in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The article is based on proceedings of the superior court in Bridgeport, Connecticut.
[35] (U) FBI; Case Information; 18 August 2017; 24 March 2017; "(U) Plea Agreement"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is a plea agreement filed in the US District Court for the District of Columbia.
[36] (U) FBI; Case Information; 23 April 2015; 10 April 2015; "(U) Arrest of [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is a copy of [Name withheld] arrest warrant, complaint, and affidavit.
[37] FBI; Case Information; 27 November 2018; 4 October 2018; "(U) United States Court of Appeals Opinion on [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is an Opinion drafted by the Sixth Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals.
[38] (U) Book; *Web of Conspiracy: A Guide to Conspiracy Theory Sites on the Internet*; 2008; p. xi; The authors are former reporters and editors who have published earlier works regarding online news sources, one of whom teaches journalism at New Jersey City University.
[39] (U) Working paper; George Washington University Program on Extremism; "Conspiracy Theories in the Patriot/Militia Movement"; May 2017; p. 15; The George Washington University Program on Extremism provides analysis on issues related to violent and non-violent extremism.
[40] (U) Journal article; Diogenes, Volume 1, Issue 7; "Conspiracy Theories as Stigmatized Knowledge"; 25 October 2016; p. 6; Diogenes is a peer reviewed academic journal that publishes papers in the field of philosophy and the humanities.

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

Intelligence Products

Customer Service Satisfaction Survey

Product Title: Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories Very Likely Motivate Some Dom

1. (U//FOUO) Please select customer type: Select One and function: Select One

2. (U//FOUO) Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following:

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A
Product's overall usefulness	O	O	O	O	O	O
Product's relevance to your mission	O	O	O	O	O	O
Product's timeliness	O	O	O	O	O	O
Product's responsiveness to your intelligence needs	O	O	O	O	O	O

3. (U//FOUO) How do you plan to use this product in support of your mission? *(Check all that apply.)*

- ☐ Integrate into one of my own organization's finished information or intelligence products
- ☐ Share contents with partners outside my organization
- ☐ Share within my organization
- ☐ Improve situational awareness
- ☐ Incorporate into training
- ☐ Incorporate into planning and preparedness efforts
- ☐ Do not plan to use
- ☐ Other:

4. (U//FOUO) How does this product add value to your mission? *(Please portion mark comments.)*

5. (U//FOUO) How could this product be improved? *(Please portion mark comments.)*

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Home > Press and Media Service > Spokesperson's Remarks > Regular Press Conference

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference on January 7, 2021



CCTV: State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi just ended his visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. What do you think is the most important outcome or highlight of this visit?

Hua Chunying: State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi just wrapped up his successful visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). He met with President Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo and held talks with Foreign Minister Marie Tumba Nzeza, and the two foreign ministers jointly met the press. Relevant press release has been issued.

China and the DRC are friends for each other, and mutual understanding, mutual support and mutual trust makes the foundation for a sound, steadily growing China-DRC relationship. In the depths of China's fight against COVID-19, President Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo sent message of condolence to the Chinese side twice. China also extended its helping hand to the DRC. In the first 10 months of last year, trade between the two countries grew by 34.4% year on year despite the impact of COVID-19. China-funded construction of the Cultural and Artistic Center for Central Africa in Kinshasa is also progressing smoothly amid the epidemic. It is worth mentioning that a MoU on BRI cooperation was signed between the two governments, increasing the number of African countries inking BRI cooperation documents with China to 45 from 44. This good news sends a positive signal to the outside world that China and the DRC are firmly committed to common development and prosperity, which will boost closer cooperation between the economic sectors in the two countries.

China congratulates the DRC on its forthcoming rotating chairmanship of the African Union (AU) and supports the DRC in performing its duties. China stands ready to strengthen coordination with the DRC to ensure the FOCAC summit this year will achieve fruitful outcomes.

AFP: A woman was shot dead during the storming of the U.S. Capitol and three others died after suffering medical emergencies. Does the Chinese foreign ministry have any comments on the violence that has taken place? Separately, what are the ministry's comments on some people in the country comparing Washington's riots with the unrest in Hong Kong? Some have described it as "a beautiful sight".

Hua Chunying: We have noted what's now unfolding in the United State. We believe that people in the United States certainly hope for an early return of normal order.

You mentioned that four people were reportedly killed in this incident, and you also described some reactions from the Chinese netizens. I would also like to share some of my thoughts with you.

First, the Chinese people have the right and freedom to make their opinions and comments online. I believe that for many people, seeing those scenes in the United States has brought back a sense of deja vu, though they brought out some quite different reactions from certain people in the United States, including from some media.

You mentioned the unrest in Hong Kong. In July 2019, radical and violent protesters in Hong Kong broke into the Legislative Council, ransacking the main chamber, smashing facilities, tossing toxic liquid and powder at police officers, and even biting off one police officer's finger and stabbing another. But the Hong Kong police showed maximum restraint and professionalism and no protester ended in death. However, as you mentioned, there are already four deaths in Washington of which the situation is less violent and destructive than that in Hong Kong.

If you still remember how some U.S. officials, lawmakers and media described what's happened in Hong Kong, you can compare that with the words they've used to describe the scenes in Capitol Hill. I made a note of some words they used. They all condemned it as "a violent incident" and the people involved as "rioters", "extremists" and "thugs" who brought "disgrace". Now compare that with what the Hong Kong violent protesters were called, like "a beautiful sight" you brought up and "democratic heroes". They said that "American people stand with them".

What's the reason for such a stark difference in the choice of words? Everyone needs to seriously think about it and do some soul-searching on the reason.

We believe that the American people still cherish peace and safety, especially when they are still struggling with a difficult pandemic situation. We hope that they will have their peace, stability and safety back as soon as possible.

Besides, I noticed that the spokesperson of the bureau of international exchanges of the China Media Group issued a statement saying that many news outlets, including a Chinese one, were attacked by demonstrators at their usual live positions outside Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Our thoughts are with the reporters out there and we call on the U.S. side to take necessary measures to safeguard journalists' safety.



China Review News: British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said on January 6 that the recent arrest of politicians and activists in Hong Kong is a grievous attack on Hong Kong's rights and freedoms as protected under the Sino-British Joint Declaration. Do you have a comment?

Hua Chunying: The Liaison Office of the Central Government in the Hong Kong SAR and the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong SAR have released statements on the lawful arrest by the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF). Those arrested are suspected of attempting to subvert the state power as set out in Article 22 of the Law on Safeguarding National Security in Hong Kong. China upholds rule of law and its Hong Kong SAR does the same. We firmly support the HKPF in fulfilling its duties in accordance with law to safeguard national security and Hong Kong's security and stability. The Chinese side has lodged stern representations with the British side over the remarks of Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab.

The core element of the Sino-British Joint Declaration is China's resumption of sovereignty over Hong Kong. The document does not accord the British side any right to interfere in Hong Kong's affairs. After Hong Kong's return, the Chinese government started administering it in accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law of the Hong Kong SAR, not the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

During the British colonial rule over Hong Kong, were the people granted any rights or freedoms? As a matter of fact, when ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1976, the British government made a reservation not to apply to Hong Kong the periodic elections provisions. Both the Public Order Ordinance and the Societies Ordinance during the British rule imposed draconian restrictions on assembly, procession and association in Hong Kong. It was only after Hong Kong's return and the faithful implementation of "one country, two systems" and Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy that the residents came to enjoy unprecedented democratic rights and freedoms. This is an undeniable fact for anyone without bias.

Hong Kong is part of China and its affairs are entirely China's domestic affairs. The United Kingdom should let go of its colonial mindset, give up its illusion of retaining colonial influence in Hong Kong, cut out the hypocrisy and double standards, earnestly respect China's sovereignty and immediately stop meddling in Hong Kong affairs and interfering in China's internal affairs in any form.



Global Times: U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo said in a statement that the 50-plus people arrested by the Hong Kong police should be released immediately and unconditionally. He also said that the United States will consider sanctions and other restrictions on any and all individuals and entities involved in executing this assault on the Hong Kong people, explore restrictions against the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in the United States, and take additional immediate actions against officials who have undermined Hong Kong's democratic processes. The United States will not stand idly by while the people of Hong Kong suffer under Communist oppression. In that vein, he announced the upcoming visit of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Kelly Craft to Taiwan. Does China have any comment?

Hua Chunying: Pompeo's statement gravely runs counter to basic norms of international relations, interferes in China's domestic affairs and judicial sovereignty, and violates the one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiqués. China rejects and condemns it.

There is only one China in the world and the Taiwan region is an inalienable part of China's territory. The Government of the PRC is the sole legal government representing China. This is a fact recognized by the international community. The United States made an explicit commitment on this in the Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, China firmly opposes any forms of official exchange between the United States and the Taiwan region. This position is consistent and clear.

Hong Kong is a society with rule of law where all is equal before the law and no extrajudicial privilege exists. Laws must be complied with and offences must be prosecuted. This is the basic connotation of rule of law. We firmly support relevant authorities of the Hong Kong SAR in cracking down on criminal offenses according to law. We stand firmly against interference in Hong Kong affairs and disruption of Hong Kong's rule of law by any country, organization or individual in any means.

For some time, a handful of anti-China politicians within the Trump administration have been staging a show of madness as their days at the rein are numbered, stopping at nothing to deliberately sabotage China-US relations for selfish political interests. Such ploys go against the trend of history and the friendly sentiment of both peoples and are bound to be punished by history.

We urge the United States to immediately stop meddling in China's internal affairs, harming Chinese interests and undermining bilateral relations. China will take all necessary measures to resolutely safeguard its sovereignty and security interests. The U.S. side shall pay a heavy price for its erroneous actions.

I also noticed that Pompeo called what happened at Congress unacceptable. Did he find the violent storming of Hong Kong's Legislative Council acceptable? He said he wanted to free the people of Hong Kong from the CPC's oppression. I hope he will open his eyes and see how the people in Hong Kong and the rest of China are leading perfectly happy lives. From Pompeo we did have learned a lot and we are actually grateful for that. Thanks to him, we Chinese people cherish our life and love our motherland more, and are more convinced in the decisions we've made and path we've taken.

I've also noticed American media's coverage of an opinion piece that says "There is not enough space in this newspaper to chronicle all of Pompeo's falsehoods." There is a post circulating on Chinese social media that jests "If the United States saw what the United States is doing in the United States, the United States would invade the United States to liberate the United States from the tyranny of the United States." In that vein, shouldn't Mr. Pompeo consider applying some sanctions on himself?

Sky News: Various Chinese officials including very senior Chinese officials have suggested that COVID-19 may have originated outside China. Does the Chinese government agree that the most likely country where COVID-19 originated is still China?

Hua Chunying: You are clear with the Chinese government's position. The Chinese government respects science and truth rather than lying around for political motivations, like some people else. We always believe that origin-tracing, as a serious scientific matter, should be carried out by scientists in a meticulous and thorough way so that truth and facts will be established. This has been the Chinese government's consistent and formal position.

Just like you could see from multiple media or reports, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in various places around the world in the second half year of 2019, and the time of first case reported is constantly updated. This, I believe, will in turn provide more clues to scientists. So we give full support to the expert team, led by WHO, to trace the origin across borders through scientific research, in the hope to find out the truth as soon as possible so that we could better address similar public health emergencies in the future.

Regarding this issue, I think all countries should show greater solidarity and cooperation, keep sober-minded and respect science and truth.

Beijing Daily: Regarding the delays in arrival to China of the WHO expert team, British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Japanese Chief of Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato said they hope China will agree to the WHO panel's arrival to China for scientific investigation on COVID-19 origins as soon as possible. Do you have any comment?

Hua Chunying: I responded to this question yesterday. According to what I've learned from the Chinese competent health authorities, China is in negotiations with WHO on the international expert team's travel to China for cooperation on COVID-19 origin-tracing.

I want to stress that tracing the origin of the virus is a scientific matter that should be studied by scientists worldwide in collaboration. The WHO team's visit to China upon invitation is part of scientific cooperation on origin-tracing between scientists of the two sides. The purpose is to prevent and better respond to similar public health crises that may occur in the future. China always adopts a positive attitude towards this.

We have noted that some people made irresponsible remarks, against which I think we must stay highly vigilant. Taking origin-tracing as a means for political manipulation, grandstanding and hyping-up will only disrupt normal international cooperation on the matter. This is the last thing we want to see and also unacceptable to the international community.

Kyodo News Agency: According to Taiwanese media reports, the United States and Taiwan held a political military dialogue today. Do you have any comment on this?

Hua Chunying: I responded to a similar question yesterday. China's position on the exchange between the United States and the Taiwan region is clear and consistent. We urge the U.S. side to abide by the one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiqués, and refrain from further undercutting China-U.S. mutual trust and causing more damages to peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and China-US relations. The Chinese side has lodged stern representations to the U.S. side.



AFP: This is regarding the Hong Kong issue again. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also said that he was appalled over the arrest of an American citizen. We wanted to know if the foreign ministry had any specific response on that front. And also, there has been international criticism over the arrests in Hong Kong with western nations accusing Hong Kong authorities of grave repression and grave attacks on freedoms promised under the "one country, two systems" setup. We're wondering if you could further comment on this front as well?

Hua Chunying: I think I already responded to that just now. Hong Kong is a society under the rule of law where nobody enjoys extrajudicial privileges. We support the Hong Kong police in handling matters in accordance with law. You mentioned that there are criticisms from members of the international community, but I wonder how many are them, if you can list? You mentioned several western countries. They cannot represent the international community.

The nature of what happened in Hong Kong is very clear. With such a similar scenario unfolding, I would like to ask these western countries, what have they said and done about what's happening in the United States? On the issue of human rights, democracy and freedom, double standard should be discarded. I hope the relevant countries can think about this and learn real lessons from it.

Reuters: According to a Reuters report, the U.S. is considering adding Alibaba and Tencent to a blacklist of firms allegedly controlled by China's military. Do you have any comment on that report?

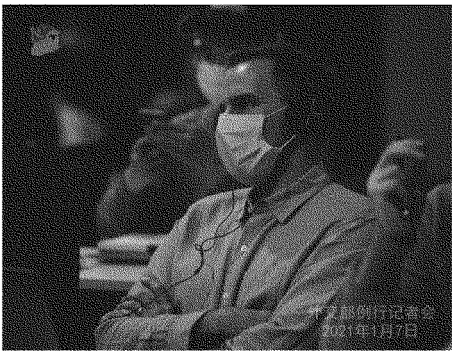
Hua Chunying: I have talked about China's position on this many times. What you just described simply shows once again that the United States has been pinning political and ideological labels on economic and trade issues and exploiting its state power to crack down on foreign companies, under the pretext of national security. When it comes to applying double standard and acting double-faced on issues of market economy and fair competition, the United States can be such a hypocrite.

The U.S. side has turned its back on international trade rules, fair competition, and normal market order, which hurts the legitimate rights and interests of not only the Chinese companies but also American consumers and those in other countries. Global investors will certainly feel less inclined to invest in such a business environment. What stands to lose is the national interest, credibility and reputation of the United States. China will take necessary measures to safeguard the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of the Chinese companies and also support them in defending their rights and interests in accordance with law.

Reuters: The New York Stock Exchange says again on Wednesday it will de-list three Chinese telecom companies. Do you have any comment on this action?

Hua Chunying: I have talked about China's position on this many times. Many media have commented on the flip-flop behavior of the NYSE. As commented by the Nikkei News, another U-turn in its flip-flop saga is seeding chaos in the capital market. One commentator said that the intent was to penalize these companies and the Chinese government, but the problem is that it ends up penalizing U.S.-based investors.

China's stance on this issue is very clear. The United States will only end up hurting its own interests, credibility and image. The global status of the U.S. capital market and people's confidence in it will also be eroded. The Chinese side will take necessary measures to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of the Chinese companies.



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The Constitutional Case for Impeaching Donald Trump (Again)

by Frank O. Bowman, III
January 9, 2021

We are, it seems, hurtling toward impeaching Donald J. Trump for a second time in thirteen months. It is entirely right that he should be impeached again, but in the whirl of the past week's events, there has not yet been a careful analysis of the constitutional basis for doing so. I hope the following can fill that gap.

In brief, the case against President Trump rests on his conduct since the presidential election of November 3, 2020. Since that day, he has – consistently, unceasingly, and deliberately – cast doubt on the results of a free and fair electoral contest that, under the rules prescribed by the Constitution and laws of the United States, he lost. Critically, it is now clear that he intended not merely to sow distrust for political purposes (or as a ploy to raise money for his post-presidential life), but to induce state officials and, ultimately, either the Vice President or Congress to nullify the results of the election and keep him in power. His efforts culminated in active incitement of a mob to intimidate Congress into refusing to perform its constitutional obligation to certify the election of Joseph Biden as the next President of the United States.

Although Trump partisans will make the effort, no objective observer can deny that these are the facts. The questions considered here are whether this conduct constitutes a proper constitutional ground for impeaching President Trump, and whether it makes sense to impeach him so close to the end of his term.

The Legal Case for Impeachment: Subversion of the Constitution

As by now a weary country knows, the constitutional standard for impeaching a president is "Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors." Unlike the Ukraine affair that led to Trump's first impeachment, the present case does not involve "bribery."

Some might call Trump's recent conduct treasonous, and in a colloquial sense it has been. But for constitutional purposes the term "treason" is narrowly defined as "levying War against [the United States], or ... adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort." Some among the organizers of last week's assault on Congress might actually fall within this definition if, as been suggested in some media reports, there were plans to seize, harm, or even kill legislators and incite wider violence against the government. But there is, at least to date, no evidence that Trump was privy to the violent particulars of these mad plans. In any event, inserting the inescapably incendiary term "treason" into the conversation is unnecessary and likely to distract attention from the irrefutable case for impeachment on other grounds.

"High crimes and misdemeanors" is an ancient term of art, adopted by the Framers of the American Constitution from British parliamentary practice. It includes some kinds of criminal conduct, but does not require commission of an indictable crime. This point was doggedly disputed by Trump's adherents a year ago, but as I and many others have repeatedly demonstrated, this is not a defensible constitutional proposition.

Historically, "high crimes and misdemeanors" has been interpreted to include a variety of serious executive misconduct, including some kinds of ordinary personal crime; official corruption; egregious instances of incompetence or neglect of duty; abuse of power; betrayal of the nation's foreign policy interests; and, centrally for present purposes, subversion of the Constitution itself. Indeed, impeachment was invented by Parliament in the fourteenth century as a defense against executive (which then meant royal) assaults on British constitutional order. By the 1600s, a common charge in the great state impeachments pitting Parliament against the ministerial agents of arbitrary royal power was that the defendant "endeavored to subvert the ancient and well established form of government in this kingdom, and instead thereof to introduce an arbitrary and tyrannical way of government." Throughout four centuries of parliamentary usage before impeachment migrated to our shores, impeachment's indispensable function was to protect the British constitution against the chief executive's will to power.

At the Constitutional Convention, George Mason proposed adding the phrase "high crimes and misdemeanors" to treason and bribery as grounds for impeachment precisely because he feared that those two offenses would not reach "attempts to subvert the Constitution." Alexander Hamilton's widely quoted observation in *Federalist 65* that impeachable offenses are "of a nature which may with peculiar propriety be denominated

POLITICAL, as they relate chiefly to injuries done immediately to the society itself" was a shot at the same target. The "society" of which Hamilton wrote was the political society the new Constitution would shape and govern. Impeachment was inserted into the Constitution as a legislative defense against a president who threatens constitutional order.

The idea that "high Crimes and Misdemeanors" includes subversion of the Constitution is reflected repeatedly in the work of the House Judiciary Committee that approved the articles of impeachment against Richard Nixon which prompted his resignation. The universally acclaimed committee staff report rejected the idea that indictable crime was necessary for impeachment and concluded that:

> Impeachment is a constitutional remedy addressed to serious offenses against the system of government. ... [Impeachable offenses] are constitutional wrongs that subvert the structure of government, or undermine the integrity of office and even the Constitution itself...

The language of the Nixon articles of impeachment approved by the Judiciary Committee endorsed this view. Article I alleged multiple instances of obstruction of justice, but made the broader assertion that these amounted to "act[ing] in a manner contrary to his trust as President and subversive of constitutional government." Article II alleging a variety of particular abuses of presidential power, and Article III alleging defiance of congressional investigative authority over impeachable conduct, both concluded with the same assertion that these were "subversive of constitutional government."

At the core of the American Constitution and of American constitutionalism as a way of political life is electoral democracy. The legitimacy of the national government depends on the continual reaffirmation through elections of the consent of the governed. Whatever the peculiarities (and undoubted deficiencies) of the processes prescribed by the Constitution for translating the votes of the people into a choice of the person who is to be president, the choice, once made, is sacrosanct. To contrive at undoing it – whether by promulgating and endorsing baseless allegations of national fraud, pressuring state officials to overturn lawful and accurate election results, or summoning a mob to intimidate Congress – is to thrust a knife into the vibrant heart of the American idea and the Constitution that governs it.

When a president does not one but all three of these things as part of a conscious effort to hold power in defiance of the will of the people – setting at naught the authority of the states over their elections, the powers of Congress as a coordinate branch of government, and the plain commands of the Constitution and statutes of the United States – that can be no other than a "high crime" requiring impeachment, conviction, removal, and disqualification from ever again holding national office.

The Proper Scope of the Articles of Impeachment

In framing the text of articles of impeachment, the House will be best served by language that does not focus too narrowly on the events of January 6, 2021 – Trump's rally, his call for a march to the Capitol Building, and the resulting deadly riot. While those were the horrific culmination of a persistent malign course of presidential conduct, it is the course of conduct in totality that makes impeachment not merely constitutionally permissible, but imperative.

Focusing too narrowly on Trump's public words on January 6 alone would permit diversions like the claim made by several academics that Trump's speech cannot be the basis for impeachment because it is protected by the First Amendment. That argument is risible on its face, and has been amply rebutted by distinguished commentators including Jonathan Adler, Ilya Somin, and former judge Michael McConnell. Regardless, the importance of the January 6 speech for impeachment purposes is not whether Trump specifically intended to advocate a physical invasion of the Capitol, but whether Trump's speech was one part of an ongoing effort to induce Congress to overturn the results of a legal election.

Of course, the fact that Trump's language during that speech and earlier could fairly be construed (and was by many in the throng) as an invitation to violent action, the fact that it did produce death and destruction in the Capitol building, and the fact that such a result was certainly foreseeable to Trump strengthens the case for impeachment and removal. For a president, self-aggrandizing reckless disregard of the obvious risk of mob violence is a removable offense in itself.

Furthermore, any articles of impeachment must be broad enough to cover Trump's later, post-speech behavior on January 6. Trump would certainly have known about the assault on the Capitol the moment it occurred. Indeed, it has been reported that he watched it on television "bemused." According to Senator Ben Sasse, White House aides reported that

at some stages of the assault, Trump was "delighted" and "excited" by what he saw unfolding at the Capitol, and "confused about why other people on his team weren't as excited as he was."

Trump took no immediate steps to send aid to the beleaguered Congress, supposedly "resisted and rebuffed" calls to authorize deployment of the National Guard, and reportedly agreed to do so at last only at the impassioned urging of staff. By then, it was far too late. The attack on the Capitol began around 1:50 pm. The rioters breached the building at 2:15 pm. The first outside help came from District of Columbia police. But DC National Guardsmen, the federal body under the control of the President and the Defense Department, did not arrive for two hours after Trump reluctantly agreed to their deployment. Unlike several of his prominent supporters, Trump failed to take even the rudimentary step of promptly going on television and Twitter to demand unequivocally that the rioters, who were explicitly there on his behalf, withdraw immediately.

Malicious inaction – through a conscious refusal to protect the national legislature while it was under attack from a violent mob of his own supporters – would be an impeachable "high crime" even if Trump had done nothing to unleash the furies.

The Pragmatic Case for Impeachment

In sum, the factual and legal case for impeaching Donald Trump for *all* his anti-democratic conduct since November 3 is crystal clear. But one might ask: Should it be done now, in the final fortnight of his expiring term? The power to impeach a president does not expire with the conclusion of his or her term in office, but an entirely lawful impeachment could, if not tightly managed, run long. The only plausible case for not acting is the risk that an impeachment proceeding might drag on so long that it would consume, for weeks or months, the time and energy of the new Congress and the incoming Biden Administration at a moment when the country faces the daunting and interlocking challenges of responding to the COVID plague, shoring up the economy, and repairing the damage Donald Trump has inflicted on the fabric of government in the past four years.

I have considered that possibility carefully. Two points convince me that this potential delay is not a compelling reason for inaction. First, Congress can, when it wishes, move at more than sufficient speed, and can even do more than one thing at the same time. It seems plain that the House will approve articles of impeachment before the end of next

week. Although Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has signaled that he will stall any Senate trial until after the Biden inauguration, thereafter, practical control of the Senate's agenda will pass to the Democrats, who have every incentive to move expeditiously.

Second, and far more importantly, Donald Trump consciously, methodically, unrepentantly set out to reverse the legal results of an American election and make himself – quite literally – an unelected autocrat. The fact that in the end he failed, albeit at the cost of lives and what may prove to be an enduring rupture of the American civic fabric, is of no moment whatsoever. He remains a mortal danger to this Republic so long as he is either in office or has the potential to return to power. The Framers limited the consequences of impeachment and conviction to two: removal from office, and where the Senate approves it, permanent debarment from "any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States."

Donald Trump is the dangerous demagogue for whom the Framers created impeachment and the attendant penalty of permanent disqualification from federal office. Both simple justice and the safety of American democracy demand that Congress at least try to convict him of impeachable offenses and banish him from our politics.

Images: Cases containing electoral votes are opened during a joint session of Congress after the session resumed following protests at the US Capitol in Washington, DC, early on January 7, 2021. – Members of Congress returned to the House Chamber after being evacuated when protesters stormed the Capitol and disrupted a joint session to ratify President-elect Joe Biden's 306-232 Electoral College win over President Donald Trump. (Photo by SAUL LOEB/AFP via Getty Images)

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POLITICO

politico.com/news/2019/09/30/trump-mike-pence-impeachment-007838

As Donald Trump stares down impeachment, allies of Vice President Mike Pence claim he is as calm and poised as can be.

The vice president's allies say he has proved his fealty over and over again, reciting the countless moments when Pence has locked arms with his unruly boss instead of joining other Republicans who turned away. Often in the darkest moments of Trump's presidency — amid controversies stemming from his brazen actions or divisive rhetoric — Pence has declined to show daylight between them. Sometimes, Trump's smooth-talking sidekick has even doubled down with him.

Trump thrust his relationship with the vice president back into the spotlight last week, when the embattled president nudged reporters during a United Nations news conference to "ask for VP Pence's conversation, because he had a couple conversations also" with Ukrainian officials.

The out-of-the-blue reference triggered questions about the vice president's role in the latest mess and the unusual relationship between the pair of leaders. If Trump falls alone, Pence becomes the 46th president of the United States — a development many mainstream Republicans would prefer. If Trump and Pence go down together or in quick succession, it's President Nancy Pelosi — a prospect that would not be lost on Senate Republicans voting on whether to oust their party's leaders.

Trump's offhand remark was a stark reminder of the eternal risks to the people in his orbit, particularly as the notoriously unpredictable president navigates the delicate politics of impeachment.

Responding to a question about the president's U.N. news conference, Tom LoBianco, author of the new Pence book "Piety and Power," asked, "You mean when he gutted Pence on live TV?"

"He tends to flash this paranoia every now and then that Pence is after the job," Lobianco said. "It's like joking not-joking. But I was shocked that he was so out in the open this time."

Pence allies say there's no reason to think the president will toss his No. 2 under the bus — something Trump has done to past advisers, Cabinet secretaries and White House aides.

"Trump is very loyal to people who have been loyal to him," former Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) said. "You look back where there's been separations, and it's often where someone has gone off in a different policy direction and been public about it."

Some people close to Pence, who spoke with POLITICO on the condition of anonymity, saw the president's recent comment as nothing more than Trump's typical stream of consciousness — an innocent statement meant to convey that neither he nor the vice president are guilty of wrongdoing.

"He's largely above reproach. No one ever accuses the vice president of doing anything like that," said one person close to Pence, referring to the allegations at the center of House Democrats' impeachment inquiry that Trump pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate Joe Biden and his son Hunter.

"The president was trying to put himself on the same ground as that," this person said.

A senior administration official dismissed the notion that Trump would throw Pence under the bus if he ever sensed disloyalty. "That is silly. It's the opposite, meaning that [Pence's] calls are fine, too," the official said of Trump's latest remark. "Think this through: POTUS and VP are gone and Pelosi becomes president? Please."

The past several weeks have been a minefield of loyalty tests for Pence, culminating with the whistleblower complaint that prompted Pelosi to embrace impeachment after months of cautioning her progressive colleagues not to rush toward it.

Pence met with Zelensky on Sept. 1 during a last-minute trip to Poland. He told reporters afterward he did not mention Biden during their conversation but did communicate his "great concerns about issues of corruption" in Ukraine. The vice president was not a participant on the July 25 call between the president and Zelensky, according to a senior administration official, who pushed back against a report saying he urged Trump not to release a transcript of the conversation earlier this week.

Before the Ukraine scandal burst into public view, Pence was recovering from a series of other controversies that put his allegiance to Trump on full display.

On Sept. 9, the president claimed he had nothing to do with Pence's stay at a Trump-owned property in Doonbeg, Ireland, far away from meetings the vice president had planned in Dublin. Trump's denial of involvement in the arrangement contradicted a prior explanation provided by Pence chief of staff Marc Short, who said the president had suggested his resort as an overnight accommodation. When Short and Pence later said the vice president made the decision on his own — because of his family ties to Doonbeg — it was widely seen as an attempt to rescue Trump from accusations of emoluments clause violations.

That same afternoon, Pence and his team found themselves in cleanup mode again. This time, the vice president pushed back on reports that he had disagreed with Trump's decision to invite Taliban leaders and the president of Afghanistan to Camp David for a secret round of peace negotiations.

"More Fake News!" Pence tweeted in distinctly Trumpian prose.

Pence's reaction was consistent with how those in his inner circle expect him to behave as the impeachment inquiry unfolds on Capitol Hill: with a mix of caution and chameleonic performances that endear him to the president.

Indeed, Pence's first public defense of the president amid reports of the whistleblower complaint came in a fiery interview Monday night on Fox News' "Hannity" — a prime-time program Trump watches religiously.

"Here we go again. The assume-the-worst media takes one report, runs with it. Democrats on Capitol Hill immediately start to denounce the president before anybody has the facts," the vice president said.

Pence also came to Trump's defense on Wednesday in a series of statements from his official Twitter account that landed right as the president was calling attention to his conversations with Ukrainian officials. Quoting from an interview he did with Fox Business Network's Lou Dobbs, the vice president — who wasn't at Trump's news conference in New York — denounced Democrats' "reckless accusations." He also repeated the president's erroneous claim that Biden threatened to withhold U.S. aid from Ukraine if a prosecutor — whom Trump has falsely claimed was investigating Hunter Biden — weren't removed from his position.

"The vice president is just as solid and loyal as he can get," DeMint said. "He is just very thoughtful and strategic and over the next few weeks, he will be the president's top adviser."

The co-dependency between Trump and Pence has long been demonstrated by their policy portfolios, their synchronized talking points and the role both men play in energizing their MAGA base. Trump, a political neophyte with major character flaws in the eyes of his most ardent evangelical supporters, has allowed his vice president, a devout Christian, to assume powerful roles on foreign policy, health care and religious freedom. As long as Pence remains his dutiful deputy and greatest defender, he gains an automatic head start for his own presidential ambitions in the post-Trump era.

"He would never take out Trump because if you are ever seen trying to kill the king, you lose the base," LoBianco said.

But even after three years of Pence's obedience and nonstop flattery, there have been signs that Trump is unwilling to reciprocate the same degree of loyalty.

Earlier this summer, the president began soliciting advice from close friends on whether Pence should remain his running mate in 2020 amid reports that he was facing pressure from his daughter Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared Kushner, to swap out the vice president for a female running mate.

And when Trump was pressed in a June "Fox & Friends" interview to endorse Pence as his natural successor, he attempted to dodge the question.

"Well, it's — I love Mike; we are running again. You're talking about a long time, so you can't put in that position," Trump said, adding he was merely willing to give it "very strong consideration."

Daniel Lippman contributed to this report.

Timeline: How a Trump mob stormed the US Capitol, forcing Washington into lockdown

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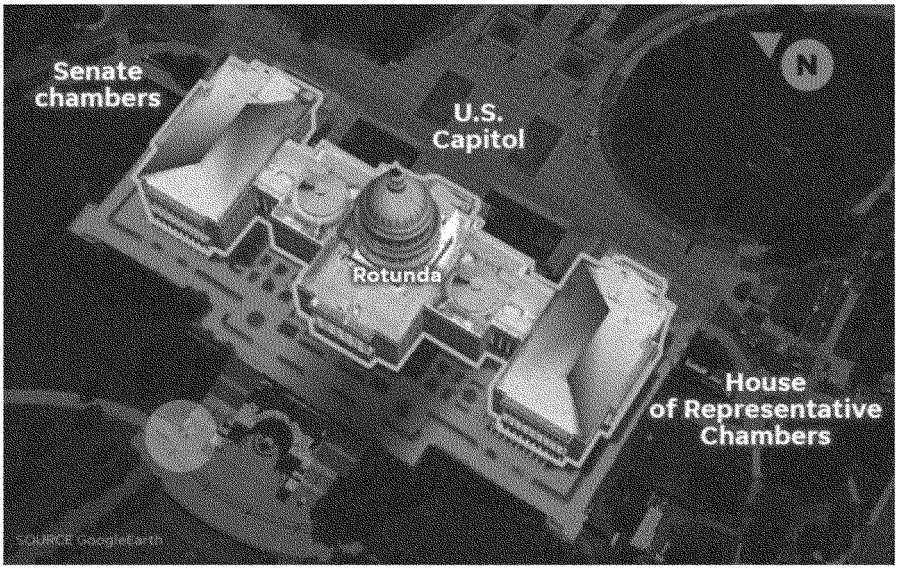

George Petras, Janet Loehrke, Ramon Padilla, Javier Zarracina and Jennifer Borresen, USA TODAY
January 15, 2021, 12:08 AM

Corrections/clarifications: This version corrects time of C-Span report of rioters inside Statuary Hall to 2:33. It also corrects the content of a Dec. 19 tweet from the president: "Be there, will be wild!"

As a shocked nation watched on Twitter and TV, a pro-Trump mob battled police, broke into the U.S. Capitol, and sent members of Congress fleeing as lawmakers were counting Electoral College votes to confirm the presidential victory of Democrat Joe Biden. Now, five people are dead, including a U.S. Capitol Police officer.

Many of the rioters came directly from President Donald Trump's "Save America Rally" that began hours earlier on the Ellipse, a park near the White House. Trump spoke to them for more than an hour, insisting that the election had been stolen.

"Our country has had enough," Trump said. "We will not take it anymore, and that's what this is all about. To use a favorite term that all of you people really came up with, we will stop the steal." When he was finished, supporters headed for the Capitol building.

Here is how events unfolded. Times are estimates.

6 a.m.

Crowds of Trump supporters, estimated in the thousands, prepare for a pro-Trump rally near the Ellipse. Many began gathering the night before. Trump tweeted about the rally on Dec. 19: "Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!"

11 a.m.

Trump's "Save America Rally" begins first with the president's sons Eric and Donald Trump Jr., then his lawyer, Rudy Giuliani. Trump starts speaking shortly before noon at about 11:50 a.m. and says, "And after this, we're going to walk down there, and I'll be there with you, we're going to walk down ... to the Capitol and we are going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women." Trump speaks for more than an hour. At the conclusion, thousands walk to the Capitol.

1 p.m.

Lawmakers gather for a joint session in the House of Representatives chamber to count Electoral College votes.

1:10 p.m.

Rioters begin grappling with police on the Capitol steps.

1:26 p.m.

Capitol police order evacuation of Library of Congress, Madison Building and Cannon House Office Building on Independence Avenue across from the Capitol.

2:33 p.m.

C-SPAN reports rioters have crossed Statuary Hall, the chamber that separates the House and Senate, heading for the House and Senate.

1:40 p.m.

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser orders citywide curfew starting at 6 p.m. Wednesday and ending at 6 a.m. Thursday. CNN reports District police are asking for more law enforcement.

1:46 p.m.

Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., tweets she is being evacuated after reports of a pipe bomb outside. "Supporters of the President are trying to force their way into the Capitol and I can hear what sounds like multiple gunshots."

2:11 p.m.

Rioters breach police lines on the west side of the Capitol.

Moments later, rioters scale the walls.

2:22 p.m.

Reports say Vice President Mike Pence has been escorted out of the Senate chamber.

2:24 p.m.

Trump tweets, "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!"

2:33 p.m.

C-SPAN reports rioters have crossed Statuary Hall, the chamber that separates the House and Senate, heading for the House and Senate.

2:38 p.m.

Trump tweets, "Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement. They are truly on the side of our Country. Stay peaceful!"

2:39 p.m.

Rioters are photographed breaking Capitol windows.

2:44 p.m.

Shots are reported fired in the House chamber.

2:47 p.m.

Huffington Post reporter tweets image of rioters at dais. "They're in the chamber."

2:53 p.m.

Rep. Alex Mooney, R-W.Va., tweets he has been safely moved from the House chamber. He says he and others were given an escape hood, a respiratory hood and mask for protection in fires or chemical accidents.

2:55 p.m.

Rep. Tim Burchett, R-Tennessee, texts "shots fired."

3:03 p.m.

Rioters are photographed on the Senate floor.

3:13 p.m.

Trump tweets: "I am asking for everyone at the U.S. Capitol to remain peaceful. No violence! Remember, WE are the Party of Law & Order – respect the Law and our great men and women in Blue. Thank you!"

3:34 p.m.

CBS reports a woman is in critical condition after being shot in the neck inside the Capitol. Police later report the woman died. She was identified as Ashli Babbitt, 35, an Air Force veteran. Her husband was quoted as saying she was a strong supporter of Trump.

In an account to WUSA9, a purported witness explains what happened, saying they had stormed the building and she was climbing through the window. He says armed police and Secret Service repeatedly warned to get back, but "she didn't heed the call," and then they shot her.

3:51 p.m.

The District of Columbia National Guard, about 1,100 troops, is mobilized to support local law enforcement.

4:05 p.m.

A congressional correspondent tweets that congressional leaders are being evacuated from the Capitol.

4:17 p.m.

In a tweeted video lasting just over a minute, Trump says, in part: "I know your pain. I know you're hurt. We had an election that was stolen from us. It was a landslide election and everyone knows it, especially the other side. But you have to go home now. We have to have peace. We have to have law and order. ... So go home. We love you, you're very special. ... I know how you feel. But go home and go home in peace."

Some of Trump's tweets addressing the riot were deleted. Twitter bans the president from tweeting for 12 hours. Twitter first froze the tweets and wouldn't allow comments or retweets, then the ban was imposed.

8 p.m.

Congress reconvenes to resume counting Electoral College votes.

Aftermath: Five believed dead, at least 68 arrested

D.C. Police Chief Robert Contee said that, in addition to the woman shot by Capitol police, two men and one woman died in "separate medical emergencies." At least 14 of Contee's officers were injured during the demonstrations, he said. Two pipe bombs were recovered, one at the Democratic National Committee and the other one at the Republican National Committee.

Police identified the woman shot and killed during the riot as Ashli Babbitt, 35, of San Diego, who was a military veteran.

A virtual look at the U.S. Capitol riot: See a full interactive story about the siege on the Capitol in Augmented Reality

"As protesters were forcing their way toward the House Chamber where Members of Congress were sheltering in place, a sworn (U.S. Capitol Police) employee discharged their service weapon, striking an adult female," police said in a statement Thursday.

A U.S. Capitol Police officer died Thursday after being injured when supporters of President Donald Trump raided the Capitol building on Wednesday, bringing the total number of fatalities to five.

Brian D. Sicknick "was injured while physically engaging with protesters" on Wednesday, USCP said in a statement. He returned to his division office and collapsed, then was taken to a local hospital where he died Thursday evening.

"The death of Officer Sicknick will be investigated by the Metropolitan Police Department's Homicide Branch, the USCP, and our federal partners," the USCP said in a statement.

The other three who perished that day were Benjamin Phillips, 50, from Ringtown, Pennsylvania; Kevin Greeson, 55, from Athens, Alabama; and Rosanne Boyland, 34, from Kennesaw, Georgia. Contee said Thursday all three died on Capitol grounds, but he didn't specify how.

Howard Charles Liebengood, a US Capitol Police officer, died while off-duty on Saturday, according to a statement released Sunday by the Capitol Police and the White House. The department did not disclose the cause of the officer's death, but The Washington Post and other news sources citing a family spokesperson said he died by suicide.

Police made at least 68 arrests, 41 of of them on Capitol grounds, Contee said. Only one of those detained was from D.C., he said.

SOURCE USA TODAY Network reporting and research; The Associated Press; multiple media reports

PHOTO CREDIT AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite; Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images; AP Photo/Andrew Harnik

Christal Hayes and Will Carless contributed with reports from the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Also contributing: Mitchell Thorson, Carlie Procell, Sean Dougherty, David Baratz, Emily Johnson, Rachel Stassen-Berger, Dinah Pulver, Jim Sergent, Susan Page, Dennis Wagner, Hannah Gaber, Jasper Colt, Shawn Sullivan, Eve Chen and Sonu Trivedi.

This article originally appeared on USA TODAY: Capitol Hill riot: Timeline of how events unfolded in Washington

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  Fauci: Working for Biden White House a 'liberating feeling'

  Speaking to reporters at the White House Thursday afternoon — just 15 minutes after meeting with President Biden — Dr. Anthony Fauci described it as "liberating" to be able to speak openly about science in the wake of Donald Trump's departure from office.

- The Week

McConnell threatens to block Senate's power-sharing agreement if it doesn't preserve the filibuster

The evenly split Senate is having a hard time agreeing who's in charge.Georgia's two new Democratic senators were sworn in Wednesday, giving Republicans and Democrats 50 senators each, with Vice President Kamala Harris as a Democratic tiebreaker. The two parties are now working out a power-sharing agreement, but Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-Ky.) commitment to the filibuster is standing in the way.McConnell on Thursday formally acknowledged Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) as the chamber's new majority leader. But as he has been for days, McConnell again implored Democrats to preserve the filibuster that lets a senator extend debate and block a timely vote on a bill if there aren't 60 votes to stop it. Democrats "have no plans to gut the filibuster further, but argue it would be a mistake to take one of their tools off the table just as they're about to govern," Politico reports; More progressive senators do want to remove the option completely.If his filibuster demands aren't met, McConnell has threatened to block the Senate power-sharing agreement that would put Democrats in charge of the body's committees. But Democrats already seem confident in their newfound power, with Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) telling Politico that "Chuck Schumer is the majority leader and he should be treated like majority leader." Giving in to McConnell "would be exactly the wrong way to begin," Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) echoed.Other Democrats shared their resistance to McConnell's demands in tweets. > McConnell is threatening to filibuster the Organizing Resolution which allows Democrats to assume the committee Chair positions. It's an absolutely unprecedented, wacky, counterproductive request. We won the Senate. We get the gavels.> > -- Brian Schatz (@brianschatz) January 21, 2021> So after Mitch McConnell changed the Senate rules at a blistering pace during his 6 years in charge, he is threatening to filibuster the Senate's organizing resolution unless the Democratic majority agrees to never change the rules again.> > Huh.> > -- Chris Murphy (@ChrisMurphyCT) January 21, 2021More stories from theweek.com Biden removes Trump's Diet Coke button from the Oval Office 7 brutally funny cartoons about Trump's White House exit Trump hires Butch Bowers as impeachment lawyer

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Biden signs executive orders reversing Trump decisions on COVID, climate change

Fresh off his inauguration Wednesday, President Biden began his term with executive orders on measures ranging from curbing the coronavirus pandemic to addressing racial inequality, many of which roll back measures enacted by former President Donald Trump's administration.

- CBS News

Kamala Harris to move temporarily to Blair House

The vice president's residence at the Naval Observatory, where Harris will live, is undergoing repairs.

- Associated Press

Chicago family law attorney charged with more sex crimes

A prominent Chicago family law attorney who was charged last summer with sexually assaulting a colleague has been charged with doing the same thing to two other women, including a client who says he told her that if he didn't have sex with him, she'd lose custody of her children. Prosecutors outlined the new charges against David Pasulka, 61, during a court hearing on Wednesday that ended with Judge Susana Ortiz setting his new bail amount at $100,000 on charges of sexual assault, aggravated sex assault and criminal sexual abuse. Pasulka, who was already out on bond in the initial case, was released from custody after posting the new amount, according to the Cook County Jail.

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- Yahoo News 360

Democrats now control Congress. What should they do first?

Recent history shows the opportunity to pass major bills can disappear quickly. What should Democrats' top priority be?

- NextShark

Chinese Actress Faces Backlash After Allegedly Hiring 2 Women to Have Her Babies Then Abandoning Them

Chinese actress Zheng Shuang is facing massive backlash after being accused by her former partner, producer Zhang Heng, of abandoning their two children born to U.S.-based surrogate mothers. An international scandal: In a 2019 audio recording that emerged on Monday, Heng said Shuang decided to abandon the children before they were even born following the end of their relationship, South China Morning Post reports. Shuang's father purportedly made the suggestion to abandon the children at the hospital.

- Yahoo News Video

Tennessee state senator charged in 2nd fraud case

Already facing allegations of stealing more than $600,000 in federal funds from a health care school she directed, a Tennessee state senator has been charged in a new fraud case, the U.S. attorney's office in Memphis said Tuesday.

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- Reuters

After caravan blocked, Honduran migrants turn anger on president

Returned Honduran migrants are directing anger against their president this week after their U.S.-bound caravan was blocked by the region's security forces, accusing him of making their county unlivable while thwarting their escape to a better life. Honduras is reeling from two back-to-back hurricanes that devastated Central America in November, as well as an historic economic contraction on the back of coronavirus pandemic. President Juan Orlando Hernandez has also been under fire from U.S. prosecutors that have accused him of having ties to drug cartels, an allegation he has strongly denied.

- Associated Press

Trump gives permit to ranchers whose case led to occupation

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management in the final days of the Trump administration issued a grazing permit to Oregon ranchers whose imprisonment sparked the 2016 armed takeover of a federal wildlife refuge by right-wing extremists. Interior Secretary David Bernhardt's restored Dwight and Steven Hammond's grazing permit earlier this week, which lasts for 10 years, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported. The men went to prison, served time and were released, but the U.S. Department of Justice later ordered them back to prison to finish the mandatory minimum five-year sentence.

- Military.com

The 26K Guard Troops in DC Did Not Face a Single Inauguration Security Threat: Top General

The scene at the U.S. Capitol, where Joe Biden took the oath of office, was a stark contrast to the riot on Jan. 6.

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Architectural Digest

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National Review

Biden Admonishes Reporter for Questioning Whether Vaccine Goal Is Ambitious Enough: 'Give Me a Break'

President Biden pushed back on a reporter at a press briefing on Thursday, who questioned whether the new administration's coronavirus vaccine goal is ambitious enough. Biden has set a goal to vaccinate 100 million Americans during his first 100 days in office. During the press conference, Biden called the Trump administration's distribution of coronavirus vaccines a "dismal failure so far," warning that "things are going to continue to get worse before they get better." However, the seven-day rolling average for coronavirus vaccine doses administered to Americans currently sits at 912,000, according to the Bloomberg vaccine tracker. (On Wednesday alone, 1.6 million doses were administered.) This indicates that the Biden administration is not far from its goal of vaccinating one million Americans per day. On Thursday, Associated Press reporter Zeke Miller asked Biden if the vaccination goal was "high enough," since "that's basically where the U.S. is right now." "When I announced it you all said it wasn't possible. Come on, give me a break, man," Biden responded. "It's a good start, a hundred million." Internal projections from the Trump administration showed that the U.S. could administer at least 170 million doses by the end of April, two Trump administration officials told Bloomberg. During the press conference, Biden also announced that he would invoke the Defense Production Act to "accelerate the making of everything that's needed to protect, test, and vaccinate and the care of our people." Biden warned that the death toll from coronavirus infections would hit 500,000 in February. Over 408,000 Americans have died of COVID-19 as of Thursday.

- Reuters

  Trump hires South Carolina lawyer Bowers for impeachment defense

  Former President Donald Trump has hired South Carolina-based lawyer Butch Bowers to represent him in his Senate impeachment trial over a charge that he incited insurrection, a source familiar with the matter said on Thursday. Bowers did not respond to requests for comment. While relatively unknown on the national stage, Bowers has represented former Republican governors in South Carolina and served in the U.S. Justice Department under Republican former President George W. Bush, according to his website.

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- Military.com

  Commanding Officer of Navy Reserve Center Fired After Investigation

  Capt. Scott Moss, who led the NOSC in Knoxville, was relieved of command by Capt. Dale Maxey.

- Politico

  'We feel incredibly betrayed': Thousands of Guardsmen forced to vacate Capitol

  Guardsmen said they were not given a clear reason why they were asked to vacate the buildings.

- The Independent

  Survivors demand Marjorie Taylor Green resign over more school shooting conspiracy comments

  Georgia congresswoman appeared to support several comments on Facebook in 2018 claiming that several deadly mass shootings were 'staged' or 'false flags'

- **Ex-Police Dog Barks At Tree, Dad Cuts It Down**

  As his palms became clammy, he could feel his pulse race. If he had not seen it with his own eyes, he wouldn't have believed what he had stumbled on.

- National Review

On Day One, the Biden White House Dodges on Abortion

During her first press conference on January 20, President Joe Biden's White House press secretary, Jen Psaki, was asked by an EWTN reporter about Biden's intentions on killing two pro-life policies: the Hyde amendment (a measure that prohibits direct federal funding of elective abortions under Medicaid) and the Mexico City Policy (an executive order that denies funding to overseas organizations that perform or promote abortion). Psaki said she'd have more to say in the coming days on the Mexico City Policy — a measure backed by every Republican president since Reagan and rescinded by every new Democratic president shortly following his inauguration. And on Thursday, Anthony Fauci announced that Biden will indeed be scrapping the policy. Psaki dodged on the Hyde amendment. "I will just take the opportunity to remind all of you that he is a devout Catholic, and somebody who attends church regularly. He started his day attending church with his family this morning," she said. "But I don't have anything more for you on that." The Hyde amendment has been the most important pro-life public policy in America for over four decades. It has survived for 45 consecutive years — regardless of partisan control of the White House and Congress — and by one estimate, it has saved 60,000 human lives from abortion each year it has been in place. Does Psaki's dodge on the Hyde amendment mean anything at all? It could just be that Biden didn't want to do anything on his first day to alienate a majority of the country that opposes taxpayer funding of abortion. It's impossible to square the calls to unity and religious themes of his inauguration with repealing the Hyde amendment — a measure that Biden himself portrayed as a policy that protects fundamental conscience rights when he supported it from 1976 to 2019. "I will continue to abide by the same principle that has guided me throughout my 21 years in the Senate: those of us who are opposed to abortion should not be compelled to pay for them," Biden wrote to a constituent in 1994. "As you may know, I have consistently — on no fewer than 50 occasions — voted against federal funding of abortions." Biden reiterated his support for the "middle-of-the-road" policy in 2008, but under pressure from progressive activists during the most recent Democratic presidential primary, he abandoned his support for the Hyde amendment in June 2019. This made it clear that Biden would sign a bill killing the Hyde amendment if it made it to his desk, but it remains unclear whether Congress has the votes and the will to pass such a bill. Representative Rosa DeLauro, chair of the powerful House appropriations committee, is pushing full steam ahead to kill the Hyde amendment, and Speaker Pelosi has said she's supportive of the effort. But former Democratic congressman Dan Lipinski — who lost a primary in 2020 because of his pro-life stance — said in an interview with National Review in December that he doesn't think Pelosi will even put a bill killing the Hyde amendment on the floor. In Lipinski's view, Pelosi might not have the votes and it could cost Democrats the majority in 2022. Polling shows that taxpayer funding of

abortion is deeply unpopular. Still, that's just one sincere pro-life Democrat's (informed) opinion, and it's entirely possible the House will pass a bill killing the Hyde amendment. If the House passes a bill ending the Hyde amendment, a lot will depend on West Virginia Democratic senator Joe Manchin. The Hyde amendment is attached to spending bills that are subject to a 60-vote threshold, and Manchin has sworn up and down that he will not get rid of the filibuster. And Manchin told National Review in December that he is "strongly opposed" to getting rid of the Hyde amendment. "As a life-long Catholic, I have always been pro-life and believe that the Hyde amendment ensures federal funds are not used to perform abortions anywhere in the country," Manchin said in a written statement. "Repealing the Hyde amendment would be foolish and I'm strongly opposed to this push from some Members of Congress. If this legislation is brought before the Senate I will vote against repealing the Hyde amendment." Still, even if Manchin keeps his word on the filibuster, it remains possible Democrats could try to expand taxpayer funding of abortion when they pass a budget-reconciliation bill, which only needs a simple majority but is subject to complex rules. In budget reconciliation, Democrats will likely attempt to pass a government-run health-insurance program (the "public option"), and Biden explicitly cited his support for a public option as a rationale for abandoning his support for the Hyde amendment. Manchin hasn't commented on whether he could support such a public option. Of course, there's no reason that a public option must fund elective abortion. In November 2009, the House passed a health-care bill that applied the Hyde amendment to the public option, but neither provision made it into law. As president, Biden could insist on supporting such a public option if that's what he wanted. As senator, Joe Manchin could do the same. They may not be able to dodge the issue for long, and they won't be able to hide behind their faith when it comes time to choose. And if they pass a bill that kills or weakens the America's most important pro-life policy for the last 45 years, they won't be able to plausibly claim that they are restoring American unity.

- The Telegraph

Trump spends first night as a private citizen 'looking for lawyers for his impeachment trial'

Donald Trump spent his first hours as a private citizen scrambling to find lawyers to represent him in his upcoming impeachment trial, as he settled into his new home at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. One of Mr Trump's first calls after leaving office was to Lindsey Graham, South Carolina senator and staunch ally, telling him he was now "looking for some lawyers" for the imminent Senate hearing. "[Trump] said, 'I really don't know the lay of the land here,' and he's looking for some lawyers," Mr Graham told Punchbowl News. "I'm trying to help him there, and he's just trying to put together a team." Mr Trump will not be drawing on his usual litigators: Rudy Giuliani, his longtime personal lawyer, is likely to step aside as he could be called as a witness, while attorneys who represented him at the first impeachment hearing have declined.

- NBC News

  60 victims, most of them young girls, caught undressing on hidden camera in Tennessee gym

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Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger Press Conference Transcript: Announces Hand Recount

rev.com/blog/transcripts/georgia-secretary-of-state-brad-raffensperger-press-conference-transcript-announces-hand-recount



Brad Raffensperger: (00:04)
Okay. Well, good morning, everyone. Today is November 11th. Before we get started in talking about why we're here today, I'd like to just give a heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving to all those that gave their lives for this country, all those people that continue to serve. This is a special day. This is a holiday. Growing up, my dad served in World War II in the Navy, and people were called to serve. And then we had Korea, Vietnam, and the people serving today. And so we can never forget, and we can never give them enough thanks for what they've done for this nation.

Brad Raffensperger: (00:56)
And one of the things that they fought for is for our right, our freedom to have free and fair elections. So that is, at the end of the day, what we really do need to be mindful of, particularly in our office, as we work finishing up and closing out the election that we just had.

Brad Raffensperger: (01:16)
Also wanted to give a heartfelt thanks to the men and women who are standing with me here today. These are election directors from across Georgia. They represent large counties, small

counties, diverse counties, and just from all over the state of Georgia. They and their staff are the ones that do the hard work on the ground of making sure that all legal votes will be counted. Their job is hard. They executed their responsibilities, and they did their job.

Brad Raffensperger: (01:52)
This is a process. It is a process defined by law. These men and women in my office will continue to follow the law and count every legal vote. As it stands today, 97 counties have sent them the final numbers in. The current margin stands at 14,101, between the President and Senator Biden, Vice President Biden. My office will continue to investigate each and every instance of illegal voting, double voting, felon voting, people voting out of state. If you report it, we will investigate it. Every legal vote will count. We will continue to follow and enforce the law.

Brad Raffensperger: (02:43)
Now let's look at the next steps. We are currently looking at having a statewide runoff on December 1 and another on January 5th. This is an untenable situation for these men and women to try and run both of these elections. With that, under my powers under health emergency, I am moving the date of the December 1st election to coincide with the federal run-off on January 5th. This will protect the integrity of both elections and make for better election administration. It has the added benefit of saving taxpayers millions of dollars. The reason we have so many of these on rollover lists voters is a direct function of COVID. This is the reality.

Brad Raffensperger: (03:32)
The next step in the current election process is getting the final county certifications in. We'll then move to the risk limiting audit, or RLA. At 1:00 PM today, I will make the official designation of which race will be the subject of the RLA. At that time, I'll designate that the RLA will be the presidential race. With the margin being so close, it will require a full by hand recount in each county. This will help build confidence. It will be an audit, a recount and a recanvas all at once. It will be a heavy lift, but we will work with the counties to get this done in time for our state certification.

Brad Raffensperger: (04:15)
Many of these workers will be working plenty of overtime. We have all worked hard to bring fair and accurate counts to assure that the will of the voters is reflected in the final count, and that every voter will have confidence in the outcome, whether their candidate won or lost. Thank you for coming today. Do we have any questions?

Audience: (04:41)
Can you describe with a hand recount or the nearly five million votes that have been cast...

Brad Raffensperger: (04:50)
Well, because we now have that verifiable paper ballot, for the first time in 18 years, we're going to have something to count instead of just pressing a button and getting the same

answer. So we'll be counting every single piece of paper, every single ballot, every single lawfully cast legal ballot.

Audience: (05:06)
Does that mean a QR code or-

Brad Raffensperger: (05:08)
That will be the names that are on the ballot, whoever they voted for president, the English written word.

Brad Raffensperger: (05:18)
Yes, we will. As I said, people will be working lots of overtime the next coming week. Lot of people will be really pleased with those paychecks if they're getting overtime.

Audience: (05:31)
Secretary, will the recount be invested on how many election voters it will take to do that? Is there also going to be a cost? Is that a lot of money, state or federal fund?

Brad Raffensperger: (05:36)
That'll be coming out of, we'll determine at some point adding additional workers. We will probably have to augment that, and we'll be looking at that. And that'll be the election directors at each county will be able to, they'll actually handle their own additional or their own county recount or risk-limiting audit county by county.

Audience: (06:00)
I understand you want to [crosstalk 00:05:59].

Audience: (06:00)
Is this how this audit was designed to work? I thought, originally, it was supposed to be looking at a small segment of the vote, not the larger picture.

Brad Raffensperger: (06:05)
Yeah. Well, that's really interesting when you start really digging into probability theorem. When you have 5 million votes, and the margin is so close, 14,000, if we pulled out 10,000 votes, all of a sudden, it could say, well, this is the person that won. We pull out a hundred thousand, it says this person won. We pull out a million, this person won. And that's why, mathematically, you actually have to do a full hand by hand recount of all, because the margin is so close. Right now it's 14,101. So it's really just the mathematics, the statistics, the probability theorems that we use for the risk limiting that are taking us to that step.

Brad Raffensperger: (06:40)
So if it was another race, or you didn't have such a close thing, then you could do that, and it would just be a sample size. But you can't do that when it's that close. This race has national significance, national importance. We get that. We understand that.

Audience: (06:56)
Does the Trump administration-

Brad Raffensperger: (06:57)
We do, we follow the process, and we understand the significance of this, for not just Georgia, but for every single American. At the end of the day, when we do a hand count, then we can answer the question, exactly what was the final margin in this race? Yes, ma'am?

Audience: (07:24)
The President just released a list of some Georgians who had passed away who supposedly voted in this election. Is that something you will look into?

Brad Raffensperger: (07:26)
Oh, absolutely. We've been open and transparent. In fact, we've had multiple meetings like this, meeting with the press. Gabriel Sterling, our implementation manager has come out to talk to you, really digging into the weeds. If you have any information about illegal voting or voter fraud, bring that to our attention. We will investigate every case that we hear.

Audience: (07:48)
[inaudible 00:07:51].

Brad Raffensperger: (07:52)
I'm hearing that that just came out this morning. We'll look at those records, and we'll start digging into that.

Audience: (07:58)
Won't the hand recount be less accurate than a computer recount? Humans make mistakes. And are you concerned about the accuracy of a hand recount?

Brad Raffensperger: (08:06)
It really is what the numbers take us to, and we're following the process that would drive us to that, that's in current state law.

Audience: (08:14)
And is it reasonable to believe that the results will change much? 14,000 votes. Is there any chance that the outcome or the results of the presidential election would change as a result? And is it possible that 14,000 votes could flip?

Brad Raffensperger: (08:31)
You're asking me to make predictions, and what we're going to deal is in facts. And so I'll report the facts, and then-

Audience: (08:36)
We're talking probablilites. What is the probability?

Brad Raffensperger: (08:38)
I'll get out my calculator, and I'll get that back to you. I can't do that off the cuff. Thank you.

Audience: (08:43)
[inaudible 00:08:43] still ask for a recount once this is done. [inaudible 00:08:48].

Brad Raffensperger: (08:52)
That's a good question. But after it has certified, the candidate that is within half percent, I believe, would still be entitled to a recount, but that would be a scan recount, just because of that is what is in state law.

Brad Raffensperger: (09:04)
Yes, sir.

Audience: (09:04)
Whap happens if certain counties [inaudible 00:09:08].

Brad Raffensperger: (09:12)
We're going to continue to work with the counties on that, but that's their deadline. And that is the process that we have in place. And we've had a great cooperation and dedication from the county election officials. That's why we have so many here. We have professionals out there. And at the end of the day, I know that I haven't asked them, but I know that there's some folks back here that maybe vote this way, and other folks that vote that way, and some go this way, that way on different elections. At the end of the day, though, they're following a process. And then what they want is they never want you to be able to question their integrity. And that's what we want for everyone. They're seeing that we're following a process. Integrity still matters.

Audience: (09:50)
[inaudible 00:09:50].

Brad Raffensperger: (09:50)
We'll continue with every county that we have, and if there's some they're still buttoning it up, then we'll roll to that. Hopefully that's the smaller counties.

Audience: (10:00)
Is there any sort of estimate of how long this will take?

Brad Raffensperger: (10:04)
It will take every bit of the time that we have left, for sure. It's a big lift.

Audience: (10:08)
So to certify-

Brad Raffensperger: (10:12)
Our date is November 20.

Audience: (10:14)
You've been saying for more than a year that we should absolutely trust the QR codes. So why is a hand recount necessary right now?

Brad Raffensperger: (10:21)
Statistically because of where we are there, we have a team of people, national experts that have worked on risk limiting audits in several other states. They're part of our team. This not just a decision we made unilaterally. We reached out to these experts. We've been working with them for several months, and we just follow the science of the risk limiting audit. We follow the numbers, and that's where it leads us, to count every single ballot by hand.

Audience: (10:45)
Does this mean that certification deadlines are no longer in effect or extended to November 20?

Brad Raffensperger: (10:51)
No, they're still required, and we want them here by Friday at the latest. We have 97 counties already.

Audience: (11:02)
Can the recount begin before the county is certified? [inaudible 00:11:03] What's the-

Brad Raffensperger: (11:02)
I'll talk to legal about that, but we want to start this really before the week is up because we understand there's an awful lot to do. Yes sir?

Audience: (11:10)
This is a little repetitive. Could you elaborate again on the timeline of the audit, and what is going to be counted exactly?

Brad Raffensperger: (11:17)
The ballot that you had, whether it was an absentee ballot, if you sent that in, or if it was voted by in-person like I did, we'll look at that ballot. And someone's going to look at who did you want, and they're just going to go through that. And you'll have two people that are doing all the counting. They'll put them out and in stacks and make sure that the stack has, let's say, a thousand ballots. And then you look at the end, you had 501 for this person, 499 for that one. You just keep on rolling through. And that's how it's going to be, all the way through. And you're going to tally it all up. It's a big process. There will be a methodical process. It'll be an accurate process. And I'm sure that there will be plenty of oversight. We want to make sure that both parties have the opportunity to observe this because we understand the stakes are high.

Brad Raffensperger: (12:07)
I don't really know. And we do what we do in Georgia. We follow our laws. And every state is 50 states, 50 different election laws.

Audience: (12:13)
What do you do if these hand counts don't match the computer counts? Do you count again?

Brad Raffensperger: (12:18)
No, that would then become the risk limiting audit and becomes a full recount. And that is what we are going to be certifying on November 20th. So thank you very much.

Audience: (12:28)
[inaudible 00:12:28] will be certified.

Brad Raffensperger: (12:30)
That'll be what we've certified because that'll be the last count, and that'd be the most accurate count. That'll be the paper ballot count.

Audience: (12:33)
This bypasses the audit, I guess, in theory.

Brad Raffensperger: (12:36)
Well, it is actually an audit. It's all in one. It's an audit, recanvas and a recount, all in one, because it'll be just really a process that gets it all.

Audience: (12:44)
Secretary?

Brad Raffensperger: (12:45)
Yeah.

Audience: (12:46)
When will the election [inaudible 00:12:48] It's going to take [inaudible 00:12:51] to certify these, go through all these. [inaudible 00:12:55].

Brad Raffensperger: (12:59)
Well, many people aren't aware of is that where we are in the process right now in our county, we're in the same place that Florida is, North Carolina and Texas. The thing is, in those races, it's not real close. In our case, there's 14,101 votes right now that separate the top versus number two. And so therefore, all eyes have focused on that. And that's really why you're seeing that. But the other states are still out there tabulating their absentee ballots. Thank you for bringing that up.

Audience: (13:28)
[inaudible 00:13:30].

Brad Raffensperger: (13:32)
That's still going on.

Audience: (13:34)
But even though someone will have been sworn in for that seat, [inaudible 00:13:38] already have been sworn in by the time the special election takes place.

Brad Raffensperger: (13:42)
The fifth district is not affected by what we're doing here.

Audience: (13:44)
Secretary, as you know, [inaudible 00:13:46] at the parties say that a lot of Republican voters and Trump supporters in particular, do not trust the election results. It's not the matching the person to the computer scan. It's the dead people vote. Did the mail service, did employees from the postal service steal the election? And how can you remedy that in counting the votes? Are you going to call the person who voted and ask, did you vote for this person. Is this person alive in your family? How do you remedy those accusation? How do you get to the bottom of that?

Brad Raffensperger: (14:22)
Well, number one, I am not the Postmaster General. We have no control over the Federal Postal Service. So when people mailed their ballots back, it's under federal government control and the Federal Post Office, Postal Service. Once it gets to the counties, then that's on the counties how to handle that. Through this process, we believe that, and we know that the machines are correct, and what you're going to find, we believe in the count. As relates to dead people and other forms of illegal voting, that's why we've asked for, if you know, of a case of illegal voting or suspected illegal voting, bring that to us. Antidotes and stories doesn't work. We need something that we can actually investigate. I'm actually very grateful that Attorney General Barr, I respect that man, this is second round as being Attorney General of the United States of America. And he is a calm, very thorough attorney. And he's directed his US attorneys to look for things. And the one thing that federal government does have is resources that we don't have. And so if they can find something that we can't, that can help to bring to bear, we want to make sure that the only people that vote are legal voters.

Audience: (15:37)
That's not part of this process that [inaudible 00:15:41].

Brad Raffensperger: (15:41)
Yeah. We're counting what the paper ballots are. And those will be ongoing investigations.

Audience: (15:45)
Does this hand recount set a precedent for every race going forward and-

Brad Raffensperger: (15:50)
No, we can pick whatever one we pick, but we understand the national significance of this session right now. Next time it may be some other statewide race. And in fact, as we rolled this out, you have to understand, many states that are doing risk limiting audit, it took them five to seven years to get this going. When Colorado did it, that was a long multi-year process. We've passed House Bill H.B. 316 in 2019. We stood up, in spite of COVID, a risk limiting audit this year, and so at nine months, 11 months, we're going to do the first statewide election with a risk limiting audit. So this is record time that we've done this. We actually eventually are going to be doing risk limiting audits for a host of elections to give you the voter confidence that when you've cast your ballot, it was accurately counted, that you have the confidence, and you can leave at the end of the day, knowing the system got it right. And then when we do that, we think it really is good for all of Georgia.

Audience: (16:46)
Are you doing this whole recount because the Trump campaign asked you to?

Brad Raffensperger: (16:49)
No, we're doing this because it is really what makes the most sense. With the national significance of this race and the closeness of this race, we have to run a statewide audit. This is the race that makes the most sense, logically, as I worked with our team, this is really what made the most sense. And we'll be following the process on that.

Audience: (17:06)
Just a followup. I understand you don't have the total cost. This could mean [inaudible 00:17:09] You said there would be a lot of overtime so it sounds expensive.

Brad Raffensperger: (17:18)
Yeah, it is. We understand that typically the counties fund their own elections. And this is part of one of the things that they'd buy into. And right now, everyone's in austerity cuts. So that's the issue. But that's where we are. And I don't have an answer to specific on that. I have my domain as Secretary of State, and I can only have my authority that I have within office. And that is something that would really be what the general assembly perhaps could do to help the counties.

Audience: (17:44)
Did I describe it correctly? It sounds like the counties will foot the bill, but there's opportunity possibly-

Brad Raffensperger: (17:48)
At the present time, that would be what it would be.

Audience: (17:52)
Secretary, you really released this to all, but you bill yourself as a national leader, Georgia as a national leader in elections. Does anything change in that? Or do you still consider yourself

a national leader?

Brad Raffensperger: (18:01)
Yeah, I think George has done a great job if you look at what we accomplished in this past year. We stood up a new voting system, new voting machines in less than six months. And that was really because we had an activist federal judge that said you can't use the old DRE machines. And so we had to do that for the first primary that we had coming up.

Brad Raffensperger: (18:20)
All of a sudden we got hit with COVID that started hitting in February, and then March the general assembly had to take a hiatus around March 15th. And so then we had to do a 360 or a 180 on what are we going to do here so that we can run elections that are safe for voters? And what does that look like?

Brad Raffensperger: (18:38)
And then coming out of that, we stood up an absentee ballot portal so that we have safe, secure requests for absentee ballots that required voters to tell us your name, day, month and year so we can identify you. And then also your department of drivers service, your driver's license number. So we making sure it truly is the voter that's requesting this absentee ballot for additional security.

Brad Raffensperger: (19:01)
And then we added ballot tracks. Then we added the wait time. And then we had very successful early day voting. We had a few lines the first couple of days, and then we had record 2.8 million voters plus voted in early voting. And we had very short lines for that. State Farm stood up, but across the state, everyone of these election directors had great success.

Brad Raffensperger: (19:25)
Then on the day of election, we had an average wait time in the afternoon was about two minutes. At one point, I screenshot it, put it out there on Facebook. We had wait times, the longest wait time was 40 minutes. It dropped down to 20 minutes, and before you know, it was 10 minutes. So tremendous results. And so I think that we've led in so many different areas, and we've proven that every vote counts, and integrity matters. At the end of the day, that's good.

Audience: (19:50)
what happens if the recount isn't done by November 20?

Brad Raffensperger: (19:52)
Well, then we just have to continue that process, but we have our charge, the November 20th is our day. And the one thing that we've learned in the construction industry, I've been in this

thing really, hit my first construction job site when I was about six years old, sitting in my dad's pickup truck. And so I grew up with the idea of deadlines, and in our business, it is all about deadlines. And every day, it's about hitting deadlines.

Brad Raffensperger: (20:17)
And our election directors, they know all about deadlines because we have this date for this, this date for that, registration, this early vote, day of election. And then all of a sudden, you have a runoff, and then you roll into next year we're going to have city and municipal elections. And then we're going to roll into the next year. So this whole operation is deadline driven.

Audience: (20:37)
I'm just trying to understand how hundreds of human being working long hours are going to be more accurate than a computer.

Brad Raffensperger: (20:45)
Well, that's why there'll be plenty of eyeballs on them to verify that every vote is accurately counted. And that's the way the process works. Because of the large number of votes and the closeness of the vote, it's the only way to do that. We've talked to our risk-limiting experts in our office and also national experts in that.we're following the process.

Brad Raffensperger: (21:07)
Thank you very much for coming out. We'll have another announcement later today. Thank you.

Georgia Senate Election Hearing Transcript December 3

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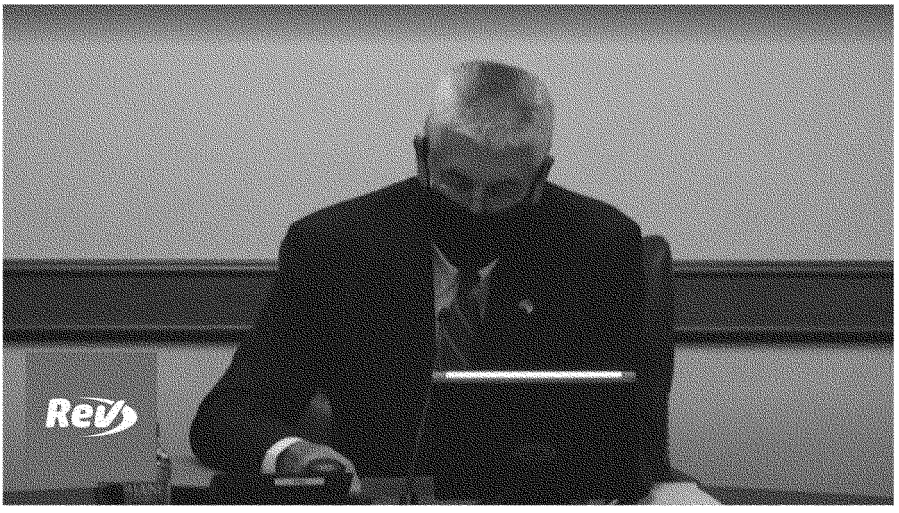

Senator Heath: (03:48)
Good morning everyone. Members of the committee, if you will take your seats, we are about to get started. And I want to ask those who are coming in the back of the room, the media, et cetera, to please keep the noise down to a minimum. Can you all hear me okay in the back? I'm going to try turning it up a little bit. We may need to get you a new battery for that hearing aid. Hello? You good? Can you hear me back there? Okay. We're going to call the Senate government oversight committee to order, and we're going to start off as we always do with an opening prayer. I'm going to call on my vice chair Senator Harbin to do that. Please, sir. And you're own microphone number one.

Senator Harbin: (04:49)
You got me there. All right. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we come to you. And Father, we ask dear Lord, that you would watch over this meeting. We desire, dear Lord, to know truth and we also dear Lord desire for there to be trust among our people, among the people of this state. And we ask, oh Father, that we would, dear Lord, be your representatives and your vessels. Also representative of the people of Georgia and ask, oh Father, that you would keep things in order and civil. And Father, that dear Lord, as we do this, that we would do this in a spirit of love and a spirit of truth. Thank you dear Lord for the privilege to live where we live. Thank you for the privileges that you've given us. And we ask, oh Father, that you would

watch over us and over what we say. And as the scripture says, "Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." And we would ask, oh Father, that we would do that in your name. Amen.

Senator Heath: (05:44)
Thank you Senator. Okay. I have lost my notes. Well, good morning. We have convened this meeting of the Senate government oversight committee. After a number of alleged improprieties were brought to our attention following the general election on November 3rd, I, as well as every member of this committee have received numerous questions and concerns about the security of our elections. And we have all heard potentially troublesome anecdotes from concerned citizens across the state.

Senator Heath: (06:46)
The organization of this meeting began some four weeks ago. My assistant, myself, and others have worked to invite witnesses who we believe can bring valuable information. It is not always been easy to reach the witnesses, as they too have been trying to carry out their responsibilities relative to elections. We have done our best to get them here. The purpose of today's meeting is to hear firsthand account from election officials from across the state in order to establish the appropriate context for the stories we've heard.

Senator Heath: (07:20)
While all of us can easily speculate what is and what is not abnormal during an election, I thought it best to hear from the experts who have dedicated considerable amount of their livelihoods to administering elections. While we certainly won't have time to address each and every story shared with us, I hope that by learning more about the process and highlighting a few of the major issues, we'll be better equipped to make a determination about what exactly happened on Election Day.

Senator Heath: (07:48)
Today, members of the committee will have a platform to ask these officials questions and witnesses will be given an opportunity to set the record straight and provide us with accurate, truthful answers. While emotions are high and opinions are strong, this meeting will not be a place for hostile attacks or baseless accusations. What has been missing in the discourse surrounding the election upfront up to this point is a true dialogue. Our objective today is to have an earnest, frank discussion with experts on what went right, what went wrong, and ask what the legislature can do to improve our elections in the future. Election security is not a partisan issue. You'll notice that this committee is comprised of members of both parties. And while we disagree on some issues, we all share the same desire, that our constituents will have trust and faith and integrity of our voting processes. We're all here because we care deeply about the needs of our communities. And if they feel that something is not right, we owe it to them to look into it.

Senator Heath: (08:58)
Before we begin, I would like to thank my fellow committee members and many senators who are not a part of this community for taking time to attend today's meeting. I believe your attendance is a reflection of your duty to ensure that the voices of your citizens are not repressed or misrepresented. I would like to thank the witnesses for coming to provide us with testimony today. I understand that it may feel intimidating to join us, given the heightened atmosphere, but my goal is for this to be a calm environment so you will be comfortable walking us through your role in the elections process.

Senator Heath: (09:34)
This is not an inquisition. This is a fact finding mission to get to the bottom of any improprieties that may have occurred. So the legislature has the information it needs to decide what changes may be necessary to better ensure integrity of our elections. For everyone joining us here today and for those watching online, I hope the meeting will be productive. And hopefully by the time we adjourn, you feel comfortable that the legislature is taking this issue seriously.

Senator Heath: (10:05)
I assure you if any abnormalities are found, we will ask swiftly and aggressively to find a remedy to better ensure sanctity at the ballot box. This committee appreciates your interest and concern regarding our election system. Our meeting notice stated that anyone with firsthand knowledge of problems with the election or fraudulent activity relative to the election may submit sworn written statements of fact/ there have been and continue to be many avenues in which you can share your concerns or experiences relative to the election.

Senator Heath: (10:39)
If you have accessed those portals, there is no need to resubmit. We have limited resources as a legislative body and must focus on facts and not research issues that have already had appropriate attention given to them. These sworn statements will be in the form of an affidavit and must include your name and contact information so you can be reached if needed for further action. For the convenience of those wishing to submit an affidavit, we have forms for your use that are located outside the committee room. And in front of the Secretary of Senate's office, as they have graciously agreed to assist us in this.

Senator Heath: (11:23)
Fill out the affidavit form with your testimony, but do not sign it until it can be witnessed by a notary public. There is a notary in the Secretary of Senate's office in room 353, one floor below us. You'll need to submit a form of identification and swear to the truth that the contents of the affidavit at the time you sign the affidavit. The secretary of Senate will hold affidavits in confidence until the completion of the meeting, at which time there'll be returned to the committee for consideration. If you do not wish to have your contact information become a part of the official papers of the committee subject to the same access as other legislative papers, you can file your affidavit with me personally. Just be sure to instruct the notary to receive your affidavit for Senator Bill Heath individually.

Senator Heath: (12:13)
Now, there's a few other things we need to address relative to COVID. Masks are required in the meeting room. And I strongly suggest wearing those elsewhere. We want to accommodate the media to the greatest extent possible, but we also want to protect the health and wellbeing of our committee members. So I have asked the Senate press office to facilitate that and to grant access to small groups of the media at any given time. And I would ask for you to not abuse that that privilege or we'll have to remove the media from the room. Of course, you always have access to the press office's feed of the video and audio of the meeting.

Senator Heath: (13:07)
There are a few additional seats, committee seat number of seats in the room. And my intention is to allow other Senators, based on their leadership status, to access those seats. So we we'll have a center sign in sheet outside. And to the best of my ability, we will try to acknowledge other senators that are in attendance. And if there's any Senators outside that feel like due to their leadership status, that they should be in the room, we will try to accommodate that. We have a doorkeeper, you can speak with him, Mr. Andrew Abbott. And we'll try to accommodate you to the best of our ability.

Senator Heath: (13:54)
At this point, I am aware of the following senators in attendance. Senator Carden Summers, Senator Lee Anderson, Senator Ed Harbison, and Senator Jeff Mullis. We also have in attendance Senator-elect Jason Anavitarte. Okay. As I said, we've been working for about four weeks now to arrange witnesses for this meeting. And it has been quite a challenge. I think all of the ones that we've reached out to at one point or another have agreed to be here. There has been issues to come up as we move along. And we'll try to explain those as we work through this, but we have made contact with Fulton County's election office to DeKalb County's election office, the Secretary of State's office, and also Muskogee County elections office. And I noticed the majority leader sneaking in back there. Welcome, Senator Dugan.

Senator Heath: (15:08)
So with that out of the way, we have representatives from the Secretary of State's office, Gabriel Sterling, the Director of Implementation, Ryan Germany, our General Counsel, and Chris Harvey, the Elections Director. We thank you all for being here. I see you're short a seat. I don't want you to have to stand all the time. It looks like there is an extra seat between microphone 11 and 12 right there. You've got a seat there. Y'all are welcome to pull those around to be comfortable there.

Senator Heath: (15:42)
We've got a hard cutoff time for our meeting to end. And that will be at 12:30. That is so that this room can be sanitized and prepared for another committee meeting that'll be in here at 1:00. The intention is to give you ample time to explain what is going on and to take some questions from the committee. I will advise you that the questions should be directed to me as the chair. And then I will turn it over to the presenter to respond to those. And you guys can choose who is most appropriate to respond.

Senator Heath: (16:24)
And so we want to have as best of access and it was productive of a meeting as possible. And so we do have a little bit of a timeline, but with that, we'll turn it over to the Secretary of State's office. And I'm not sure, podium mic right here. See if this gets... Thump your mic.

Ryan Germany: (16:46)
Can you hear me?

Senator Heath: (16:47)
Yes, sir. We're good.

Senator Harbin: (16:49)
Thank you.

Senator Heath: (16:49)
Thank you.

Ryan Germany: (16:51)
Thank you, Chairman Heath for inviting our office to this committee meeting and for the opportunity to address the committee. My name is Ryan Germany. I'm the General Counsel for the Secretary of State's office. I've been in that position since 2014. I've had the privilege to serve three secretaries, Secretary Kemp, Secretary Crittenden, Secretary Raffensberger, and it's been a privilege to serve today. What I thought I would do, Mr. Chairman, if it is all right with you, is just make a few opening remarks to try to address some of the consistent questions. And then we're, of course, happy to take your questions. And I think as you suggested, we have three people here. We might have to kind of figure out how to best divvy up those questions when that time comes.

Ryan Germany: (17:39)
A few things I want to address to make sure I address before opening up for questions are some of the frequently asked questions we've received regarding the 2020 election, including questions about signature verification, absentee ballot drop boxes, and then what I think we should be looking at in terms of moving forward to further strengthen Georgia's election processes. And then, of course, we're happy to take any questions.

Ryan Germany: (18:03)
Georgia has some of the strongest laws in the country to ensure secure elections. We don't allow ballot harvesting. We do citizenship checks during voter registration. Absentee ballots have to be requested through signature verified applications or through a secure online portal that requires a Georgia photo ID to match what's on file with the voter registration office. Signatures are then checked again on absentee ballots when they're returned. So we, in essence, have a double signature match requirement.

Ryan Germany: (18:33)
Absentee ballots have to be returned by 7:00 PM on election night. And my job over the past seven years has been to ensure that those legal protections are upheld under what's been an onslaught of legal challenges they have faced. As those of you in this room know, Georgia has been the epicenter of election litigation in the country over the past seven years. And we knew going into 2020, that 2020 would be no different.

Ryan Germany: (18:59)
We were one of the main targets of the Democrat party's four pillars, litigation strategy. Some of those pillars were to allow ballot harvesting and to extend Election Day past November 3rd by accepting ballots after Election Day. In Georgia, we wanted to make sure that our laws were upheld, including our law banning ballot harvesting and our law requiring all ballots to be received by the elections office no later than 7:00 PM on November 3rd.

Ryan Germany: (19:32)
We felt strongly about this, not only was extending Election Day past November 3rd, in my opinion, a twisting of the Constitution to try to benefit a preferred candidate, but in Georgia, we're one of two states that have general election runoffs. So our election officials have to immediately get started getting ready for runoffs. And as the Chairman alluded to earlier, they're busy doing that right now for, of course, some very high profile Senate runoffs and PSE runoff on January 5th. Early voting for those runoffs starts December 14th. So they're busy getting ready for that while they're also completing their recount of the presidential election.

Ryan Germany: (20:18)
Fortunately, from the litigation standpoint, we were able to accomplish all of those goals. Our ballot harvesting statute was challenged, but it was upheld. And a district court judge did initially extend the period to receive absentee ballots past Election Day. But her order was stayed by the Eleventh Circuit. And that Eleventh Circuit opinion, staying Judge Ross's order that extended the time period to accept absentee ballots.

Ryan Germany: (20:52)
One of the things that the Eleventh Circuit mentioned was the drop boxes that our State Election Board allowed. And I know there has been some questions about that. The drop boxes, I have with me here, the Eleventh Circuit said that decided the drop boxes as one reason why "We didn't need to receive the receipt. We didn't need to extend the ballot receipt deadline past Election Day." So I think that turned out to be a good thing. I have with me here, I don't know if all of y'all can see it, but I'll hold it up. Our drop boxes are of course required to be under 24/7 video surveillance.

Ryan Germany: (21:35)
And each of them have to post a notice that says, "Notice this location is under video surveillance. Only the following individuals may possess or deliver an absentee ballot, the voter him or herself, the voter's approved family members, mother, father, grandparent, et

cetera, an individual residing in the same household or a caretaker of a voter with disabilities." And it also sites " Warning. Unauthorized possession of an absentee ballot violates Georgia law and is punishable by up to a fine of $10,000, or a term of imprisonment up to 10 years or both," or it cites that "Willfully destroying the facing or delaying delivery of any ballot violates Georgia law."

Ryan Germany: (22:18)
This the notice that's posted on each secure drop box, you may have seen some of them in your counties. Obviously, video surveillance and this notice are higher levels of security than what's required around your usual USPS drop box. And so we think that the drop boxes worked well. Regarding signature verification on absentee ballots and absentee ballot applications. First, elections in Georgia are run by local communities in each of our 159 counties. Within those communities, elections are overseen by a bipartisan Board of Elections and Registrations or in the 30 something counties where elections are run by the probate judge, the voter registration and absentee ballot signature verification function are overseen by a bipartisan Board of registrars.

Ryan Germany: (23:18)
And there's a reason that elections in each county are run by a bipartisan board. It's to ensure that each political party has a voice and direct supervision and access into every part of the process. These bipartisan boards have hire and fire authority in their counties. They can appoint absentee ballot clerks, and they oversee procedures to ensure that state law and regulations are being followed, including verification of signatures on absentee ballots and absentee ballot applications.

Ryan Germany: (23:47)
We received quite a bit of questions before the election, before the November election, and also currently about whether or not the signature verification process is public. The answer to that is yes, our Georgia code states that elected officials must perform their duties in public. And what we told people before the election was it's public. Now, it means you can be in the room. It doesn't mean you get to look over someone's shoulder. And it doesn't mean you get a vote necessarily. But the bi-partisan Board of elections, they have direct access to everything, including the Republican members and the Democrat members, and they do get a vote. And in fact, they're the people who are charged with verifying that. So it's both public for public observation and it's open to each political party through direct intervention and oversight through their representatives on each County Board of Elections and Registration.

Ryan Germany: (24:51)
One question that we have received a lot is about a signature match settlement agreement that we entered into in February or March of this year. That we entered into a settlement agreement, the Democratic party, DNC, and I think DSCC, had challenged our signature match law asserting that it was unconstitutional. So we really wanted to make sure that that voice, that that check was upheld. So we were able to settle the case.

Ryan Germany: (25:28)
And one of our main goals in settling that case was to ensure that Election Day was not extended. We saw this in a post election in 2018 when federal judges, right after the election, ordered counties to go back and do things or allow additional time for things. And we wanted to make sure that didn't happen because we think it's a twisting of our law. And because it's not something that counties really have time to do in terms of good election administration. So we were able to settle that case by doing one thing we had already planned to do, which was define the timeline when a county had to get out a notice of a signature issue on a ballot. There was a law passed, as you guys well know, in 2019 that introduced a cure period for absentee ballots that had signature issues. That was something that had been going around the country. And for absentee ballots that didn't have a cure period, they were basically getting struck down all around the country. So we added that cure period to make sure that our signature match laws were upheld.

Ryan Germany: (26:49)
The State Election Board passed a rule that said you have to get out the notice of a signature issue to the voter within three days, or if it's within 11 days of Election Day, within the next day, because we wanted to ensure that the voters had time to do that. And we wanted to ensure that judges didn't say at the end of the day, "Oh, there's not enough time. We need to extend this this cure period of time past the Friday after Election Day." So we did that.

Ryan Germany: (27:23)
And the other thing that we agreed to do in that settlement agreement was put out an official election bulletin, which that's something that our office sends to counties. It's not a, it's not a law. It's not a regulation passed by the State Election Board. It's basically us talking to counties and saying, "Hey, here's something we think you need to know. Here's our recommendation on how to best follow Georgia law." The first sentence of that official election bulletin said counties and I left it downstairs. I apologize. But it said "Counties are required to verify signatures on absentee ballot applications and absentee ballots on both the signature in ENet, which is our voter registration system, and the signature on the absentee ballot application. And if the signature doesn't match, you follow the process set out in OCGA 21-2-386.

Ryan Germany: (28:15)
And we actually knew pretty well how counties were doing this because of all the litigation in 2018. And what we recommended to them was actually the process that many of your counties already followed in terms of doing signature matches. So that's why we agreed to that in return for that, we got a release of all signature match claims for the rest of 2020, which I think helped to accomplish our goal of not extending Election Day past November 3rd.

Ryan Germany: (28:50)
One other question we've been getting a lot is to... That wasn't a question, maybe it's more of a request, is to perform a signature audit of signatures on absentee ballots and then

applications and signatures on file. Our office investigates elections issues. When we receive a specific complaint of fraud or irregularity in the process. We have over 250 investigations ongoing right now, many of those are about absentee ballots.

Ryan Germany: (29:26)
And many of those will include a signature match or kind of like a signature audit of the voter's absentee ballot application and their vote on file. One thing that we have seen come up quite a bit is allegations from individual voters that when they went to vote, they were told "You have requested an absentee ballot." And the voter said, "No, I haven't." So that's something we've been looking into. And the voters is kind of understandably concerned, "Oh, this is fraud. Someone's doing this for me." What we have seen in everyone that we have been able to look into so far is the voter was on was what we call the rollover list. In Georgia, there's a law that if you are over 65 or if you are disabled, or if you are a military or overseas voter, you can make one request for an absentee ballot and then receive an absentee ballot for the rest of the election cycle.

Ryan Germany: (30:27)
And that's limited to those voters. You have to check the box saying, " Yes, I'm one of these groups. And I would like to receive an absentee ballot for the rest of the cycle with no additional requests." So I think every one of those voters we've looked into was on the rollover list. So the voter was correct that they didn't request an absentee ballot for that specific election, but they had requested one earlier this cycle. And then they checked the box to say, "Yes, I'm over 65. And I would like to receive one for the rest of the cycle." So we open our investigations...

Ryan Germany: (31:03)
So we open our investigations based off of specific allegations of fraud or irregularity. Our investigators, we have 23 investigators, they're all post certified law enforcement officers. They're armed. They carry handcuffs. They have that authority. So these are law enforcement investigations. Obviously, we want to make sure when we're opening them that we're doing it based off of allegations that are actually investigatable and not feelings of I don't like the result of this election. If there are any of course, and we appreciate the chairman's accepting of affidavits. And we certainly appreciate you sharing those with us if there's anything to investigate from that side. And we of course will. We're investigating out-of-state voters with absentee ballots, and that's a difficult thing to investigate because there's many people who live out of state who are completely legitimate Georgia voters.

Ryan Germany: (32:06)
Some of the data we've received about oh, this person moved and no longer lives in Georgia. Well, they have APO addresses, which are military addresses, so they don't lose their residency in Georgia. Other examples of that would be college students. They don't necessarily lose their residency in Georgia either when they go out of state for college. So it really requires kind of an individualized investigation into each allegation and. That's what our investigators are doing. Before I turn it over or open it up for questions. I do want to talk

about some of the things that we've seen this year from an election standpoint and what we think we can do or what we think we should be looking at going forward to further strengthen Georgia's election procedures. One thing we have to keep in mind that I think we've learned the past couple of election cycles in Georgia is we have close elections.

Ryan Germany: (33:07)
And over the past few election cycles, we've had people from both sides of the aisle who are really spreading things that decrease trust in the system and the results of our elections. And it seems that's basically been a bi-partisan thing. It was generally from the left after 2018 and now it's from the right after 2020. But from my perspective sitting in the same place on both of those, it's kind of eerie how similar the claims are. It's a lot of the same fact patterns that one side would call suppression and the other side calls fraud. And that's what we're seeing. What we do is of course we investigate each of those and see what the facts are. But so I think our main job going forward is we've got to build trust in our elections.

Ryan Germany: (34:04)
I think we've done a lot of things that are helpful for that. We now have a paper ballot system. So we went in after we did the presidential election, for the first time ever, we were able to go back and do a hand tally of all the paper ballots. And that's using the paper ballot, the text on the ballot. Not scanned by a scanner, people looking at what's on the ballot. The result of that audit as you guys know showed that the result of the presidential election was confirmed and the original count was very accurate. I forget the exact difference, but it was a very small difference. They're doing a recount right now re-scanning all the ballots, all the paper ballots. And we'll see the results of that should be available shortly. But from what we have heard, we don't expect any large changes and that we do expect to see some minor changes in the exact numbers, but nothing that will change the result.

Ryan Germany: (35:08)
So we've done that. And the audit and the paper ballots I think can really help. One thing that happened this year, that of course, no one was expecting was, as we all sit here, we're in our masks, is COVID. And I think COVID led to a massive increase in absentee ballots. But we got some, I don't want to say complaints, but more observations from election officials that they were being asked to really run three systems at one time with the massive increase in absentee ballots. And that's not something that's sustainable. In Georgia, we've had no excuse absentee voting for since 2005, but up until this year, the preference of Georgia has really seemed to be to vote in person either on election day or in our three weeks of early in person voting. In 2018, I think less than 5% of people chose to vote absentee by mail, even though we still had no excuse absentee voting then.

Ryan Germany: (36:16)
This year, it went up to, I think in the general election, about 25% of ballots, 1.3 million ballots were cast absentee by mail. And I think what we found working with election officials in each county, it's a lot to ask of them to process all those absentee ballots while doing three weeks of early voting and then while getting ready for Election Day. So I think that's

something we need to think about going forward. One other thing that I would say is it seems like it used to be, even though before this year, even though we had no excuse absentee voting, the people that were voting absentee by mail really were people that needed to for some reason. Either they were actually absent, they're disabled. They had some reason to vote absentee. This year of course, that's going to go up because of COVID and people just wanting to stay home, but I think another reason it went up is campaigns in third party groups who are really kind of treating absentee by mail as sort of a first bite at the apple.

Ryan Germany: (37:25)
Not as, hey, this is a resource you can use if you need it, but as a first bite at the apple to try to get everyone to do that. And then if they can't do that, get everyone to vote early and then do that. And that doesn't really work very well. That creates a lot of work for county election officials. We had over 350,000 absentee ballots that were canceled, which means somebody sent in an application, it was reviewed by the county. A signature was verified. The absentee ballot package was mailed out and the voter decided they wanted to vote in person, which is fine. We have a process for that, but then when they show up in person, they've got to either surrender their blank absentee ballot or the poll worker has to check with the elections office has this absentee ballot been received?

Ryan Germany: (38:16)
And if not, cancel the absentee ballot to make sure it can't be received later. And so it creates a lot of work for people that probably didn't even want an absentee ballot in the first place. So we are seeing some of these third- party groups who, it's of course their right to try to engage the electorate, but I think there's also a responsibility to do it in a more responsible fashion. And we're not seeing that. Secretary Raffensperger has already said that he does not believe signature match is the best way to verify absentee ballot applications or ballots. And we're looking at what other states do to see if there's a better way to do that utilizing technology.

Ryan Germany: (39:01)
We've seen one example of that in our online absentee ballot portal that the state election board authorized us to make and we've seen similar results with that kind of like with online voter registration a few years ago, where what we do with that if the voters first name, last name, date of birth, and driver's license number matches what's on file, they can request an absentee ballot through that portal. It really helps. It's easy for the voter. We think it's more secure because it has that driver's license check and it makes sure there's no data entry or other types of issues at the county level. So there's going to the address that the voter confirms. So that's an example I think of a better way to verify these and we'll be looking at what other states do with that as well.

Ryan Germany: (39:59)
One other thing that we've seen with the huge increase in absentee ballots is allegations of people who are no longer residents here voting here. And I mentioned that earlier, we're investigating that. This is kind of unfortunately out of our hands or even out of you all's hands, but there's federal law that restricts what we can do on that front. The way it works

right now based on a law passed in 1993, when we identify that someone has moved, we move them to inactive. They remain on the rolls for two general election cycles. That's a long time in this it feels like a lot has changed since 1993 in terms of how quickly things happen, how quickly we can get in touch with people, but that law basically still remains the same. So I don't think that's for me probably. [inaudible 00:41:00]. But so I think that's something we always want to look at what we can do to improve list maintenance. We've done that, I think, through joining the Erik process and we'll see once we get up and running on that next year, that will really help.

Ryan Germany: (41:19)
And the other thing I think we need to look at is the state intervention into consistently failing election boards, similar to there's a process where the state can intervene in consistently failing school boards. We have a few counties that seem to always be coming up under the state election board, and we've seen it with the audit and the recount where we kind of know what counties are going to have issues. And as I mentioned earlier, they're run by bipartisan boards who have hired fire authority. We don't have that, the Secretary of State's office, the election board doesn't have that. I think it's a good thing that elections are run locally, but I do think there should be a process where the state can intervene in consistently failing counties. And I will wrap it up and I'm happy to take any questions. I don't think I introduced Chris Harvey next to me is our elections director and Gabriel Sterling is the voting system implementation manager. So we might kind of divide up the questions as to who might best know the answer.

Senator Heath: (42:34)
Thank you. That was very informative. And I want to say that I really do appreciate the Secretary of State's office being accessible to us as legislators. I know that every time that I've reached out, I've gotten prompt responses from you guys. And I have not heard of any legislator who has expressed any complaint about access to the Secretary of State's office. You guys have been very forthright with us and we appreciate that. I think it goes a long ways towards developing this confidence in the election process that's vital to our democracy.

Senator Heath: (43:27)
Is that the conclusion of the Secretary of State's presentation? I mean, you guys didn't intend to present just going to answer questions? Okay.

Ryan Germany: (43:35)
Yes, sir.

Senator Heath: (43:39)
I trust that there's some questions that committee members may have and if you will press your button on your microphone, to the best of my ability, I'll try to recognize you in order, but I did want to take just a quick break here to recognize additional senators who have joined us. Caucus Chairman John Kennedy has joined us. Kate Kirkpatrick texted me and said she was watching online. Senator Matt Brass was at the door. I think he is now watching

online. Senator Larry Walker, our vice chairman, has joined us. So we appreciate that. You guys, anyone else, any other Senators that are participating, I'd like to hear from you. We'll recognize you. And I think it's also be appropriate. I wouldn't want to leave out our community members. I'll just run through that list real quick. All of the committee members are here. Vice Chairman Marty Harbin, our secretary. Elaina Parent, Senator Greg Dolezal, Senator Jim Jerdan, Senator Shake Vermon, Senator Valencia Sea. Our protium, Senator Butch Miller, Senator Randy Robertson, Senator Tyler Harper, and Senator Steve Gooch, our whip, is also in attendance.

Senator Heath: (45:05)
I appreciate you guys being here and being willing to help us accomplish our goals here. I see a message that Blake Tillery is also joining us from his office. I'm not seeing any questions on the screen here. [inaudible 00:00:45:29]. The buttons are not okay. Well, a button lit up earlier I saw. I know somebody's button lit up, but so well, I'll just raise your hand if you want to ask a question. I think I saw Senator Robertson first. It looks like we'll go down the list. Let me defer to the protium first then. Which mic are you? Are you on 14? Two or 14? Try that and-

Senator Robertson: (46:00)
Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Appreciate you convening this committee today. Earlier you mentioned the 24 hour seven video surveillance of the drop boxes. What has your experience in retrieving the video surveillance and has it been consistent throughout the process?

Ryan Germany: (46:24)
Yes, sir. Good question. One of the things that's in the state of license with regulation is the video surveillance has to be kept for 30 days after certification or till the conclusion of an election contest, which there are numerous election contests going on right now. And it has to be given to Secretary of State investigators upon request. When we just renewed that law we added or to the public at basically the least prohibitive cost possible. It's always been a public record and public has made open records requests [inaudible 00:00:47:02]. We have requested it as well for certain investigations. We received a complaint in Cobb County regarding suspicious activity around a drop box. We requested the surveillance. We were able to get it very quickly and review that time period at that specific drop box and found that there was not anything kind of untoward that happened. So any anytime we've requested it from a county, we have received that. I know Fulton County had some issues at the very beginning having everything up and running back in the primary, but those seem to have been resolved.

Ryan Germany: (47:44)
What I have told public people who are making public requests, if you make a request and you're not receiving it, let us know because that's something that we want to make sure they are publicly available. And a few people have taken us up on that. And then we've requested

that tape directly from the counties. And I believe we're in the process of getting some of that. One thing that people want to know is did people close the drop boxes on time? There's been a lot of requests for that 7:00 PM on election night and later-

Senator Robertson: (48:18)
Next question.

Ryan Germany: (48:18)
... to make sure they close them on time. We told the counties beforehand, you got to make sure you close these on time because in this day and age, as we all know, everyone's going to have their phones out. In addition to the videos, they're going to have their phones out watching it so you better make sure. And the indication that we have is that they did. We've requested some video surveillance from certain counties to confirm that, but we have not seen any essences of that, of keeping them open too late at point.

Senator Robertson: (48:49)
So to summarize your answer, which was very thorough by the way, everywhere you requested the video surveillance, you received it and the drop boxes were closed on time in each and every instance.

Ryan Germany: (49:02)
Correct. We just requested a few more yesterday, which I don't think we've received yet, but I believe we will based on our past practice.

Senator Robertson: (49:09)
Thank you very much.

Ryan Germany: (49:09)
Yes, sir.

Senator Robertson: (49:10)
Mr. Chairman. By the way, I also am aware that Senator Billy Hickman is online watching as well.

Senator Heath: (49:18)
Yes sir. I was about to make that announcement.

Senator Robertson: (49:18)
Thank you. Thank you.

Senator Heath: (49:30)
Okay. [inaudible 00:49:30]. Recognize Senator Gooch, on microphone number three, our whip.

Ryan Germany: (49:36)
Thank you. Mr. Germany, thank you for being here. I think I'll make a statement first. And I have a lot of questions. I don't think I'll be able to get to them. In fairness to all the other committee members, I think we want to get everybody's questions in, but [crosstalk 00:49:50].

Senator Gooch: (49:52)
But I live in a very conservative, Republican dense area in north Georgia. I represent about 200,000 constituents in north Georgia, Forsyth, Dawson, Lumpkin, White, Union, Fan, and Gilmer and Pickens. I sit around the table at numerous places and have breakfast with bus drivers and contractors, construction workers, school teachers, common everyday citizens of Georgia. And then I also go to Republican Party meetings and so forth. So I'm going to try to build the statement based on a consensus of what I'm hearing. From the people that I represent, we have totally lost confidence in our system, in our election system this year.

Senator Gooch: (50:41)
Maybe that's not a fair statement and I'm not directing that to you or-

Ryan Germany: (50:46)
I mean, if that's how they feel, that's how they feel.

Senator Gooch: (50:49)
That's how they feel. And I think we all have a duty as elected officials that represent them, I'm their voice and I'm here today on behalf of those citizens. I have a duty to let you know that this issue isn't going to go away unless we make some changes. And I've already heard you go through a list of about 12 things that you or Secretary Raffensperger has indicated he feels or you feel needs to be looked at or adjusted or modified. And I'm wondering why we haven't already done that. And maybe you've asked for those changes in the past. I don't know, and we're not going to be able to go back and change the past, but we've got to establish trust in our system immediately.

Senator Gooch: (51:32)
We have an election coming up on January the fifth. And so one of my questions is what can we do to reassure the citizens of Georgia that this next election is going to be a fair election? Not that the other one wasn't, but a lot of people feel that it's not fair and that there was fraud and you've already indicated there's multiple cases of fraud being investigated. How do we know there's not more? How do we know there's not widespread fraud out there? Have you initiated any kind of forensic audits on the machines? I've heard a lot of comments about the Dominion machines. What kind of external or internal forensic auditing can be done or should be done? Should we bring in the GBI? Should we bring in a third party computer scientists to look at the software programmed into these machines?

Senator Gooch: (52:19)
I'm hearing a lot of things out there. And I don't know, honestly, I can't tell you what's true and what's not true about it. I'm very concerned about what I'm seeing in Georgia. I've never seen this before. I'm 53 years old, but I've never seen the kind of mistrust that we seem to have at this time in my district. So signature verifications, why do we have them? How did we get here? I understand you said there was a consent agreement that you agreed with the Democrat Party as part of that lawsuit. Was the Republican Party of contacted on behalf of that agreement before you signed it? I'd like to hear more about that if we had time. The ballot harvesting, you say it's against the law, but I'm hearing all kinds of rumors that ballot harvesting does happen, not only in Georgia, but across our country. What do we do to stop it? How do we investigate it? And what do we do going forward to make sure it doesn't happen?

Ryan Germany: (53:16)
We do have a few investigations open into ballot harvesting. And if you have anything that we should be investigating, please let us know. If your constituent says something, please pass it on because a rumor doesn't help, but what we can do that I think will help build trust is okay, I'm hearing this. Tell us what it is. We can investigate it and then see if there's something to it or not. The ballot harvesting investigations that we are having right now, there seem to be some confusion in a couple south Georgia counties where candidates themselves are actually going around doing ballot harvesting. And that's subject to investigation right now. I'm glad you asked about an audit of the machines. That's something that we've already done. We had an independent voting system testing lab come in after the election and audit a cross section of our machines. I think we've released those results to you guys, but I'll happy to recirculate them. And what they found was no, the machines were working exactly properly.

Ryan Germany: (54:24)
The software on the machines is exactly what's supposed to be on there. There's a thing called a hash value where we know the expected hash value. If someone gets in and changes something, then the hash value's not going match. And if you're going to have any kind of code or something like that or any kind of virus, the hash value's going to change. So they go in, they check the hash value, make sure that it's what we expect, and it was in every instance. The other thing that I would say on the machines is the machines, as you guys know, scan ballots through a QR code that represents the voter selections. There was a lot of allegations before the election. Oh, how do we know that this is going to be accurate? So what we did when we did 100% manual tally in our audit of those ballots, that manual tally's based not off the QR code, but off of the text on the ballot of the candidates name. I mean, that proves that what was scanned matches what was printed on those ballots.

Senator Gooch: (55:38)
Can I ask a couple just yes or no? And I will do that. The voting machines, when you go in and you punch on the touch screens that I'm going to vote for a president candidate A or B, do any of those machines have any connectivity to the internet?

Ryan Germany: (55:56)
No.

Senator Gooch: (55:57)
Do they have a USB connectivity?

Ryan Germany: (56:01)
They have a USB connectivity in a sense that that's how the machines are loaded, but then that's sealed prior to when they're in use. So no one has access to it.

Senator Gooch: (56:12)
So do those machines get used to tabulate the votes or is it just through the scanner?

Ryan Germany: (56:19)
The touchscreens are just used to print a piece of paper. That's it.

Senator Gooch: (56:24)
And then when you take the ballot over to the scanner and you scan it, can it spit the ballot back out and then you put it back in again or does it go in and it drop in? Because I'm speaking from-

Ryan Germany: (56:34)
Yes sir.

Senator Gooch: (56:35)
Okay. So my personal experience is that once it goes in, it drops down. It doesn't come back out.

Ryan Germany: (56:40)
Correct.

Senator Gooch: (56:40)
I've been told there's cases where the ballots have been rejected multiple times and they go back in, come back out, and go back in and that some of those machines could be programmed to count those multiple times.

Ryan Germany: (56:53)
So there's been allegations of that in Michigan I think I just saw or maybe was Arizona, one of these other states. So one thing that I think was good about Secretary Raffensperger ordering the audit the presidential election, the fact that that hand count of each ballot almost exactly matched the machine count proves that didn't happen.

Senator Gooch: (57:17)
Thank you.

Ryan Germany: (57:18)
If you're going to scan the same ballot multiple times, you're not going to get the same count when you do a hand count.

Senator Heath: (57:25)
Okay. These are good questions. And we've got like two hours left. I'll get to it. I think we're going to have some folks that are not going to be able to be here today. So we've got a little bit more time, but I don't want to take too much of your time because I know you all got work to do as well, but I wanted to go down to our minority party members. I think I saw some hands down there when I asked for questions. They say which, you're on number seven?

Senator Parents: (57:58)
I'm on number seven.

Senator Heath: (57:59)
Let me get you lit up here. Senator Parents, you're recognized.

Senator Parents: (58:06)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you so much for being here and thank you for all the... I know that all of you have been putting in really long days for a long time so thank you so much. And also, I'm sorry that you personally and other elections workers have come under verbal and other attacks, which obviously none of us think are appropriate in any-

Senator Heath: (58:31)
If you will, pull your microphone closer. I'm afraid if I keep turning it up, we'll get a lot of feedback.

Senator Parents: (58:34)
Can you hear me?

Senator Heath: (58:35)
That's better.

Senator Parents: (58:37)
None of us think that that's appropriate in any sense so thank you for all your hard work. So you said that you have about 230 investigations open or some are closed?

Ryan Germany: (58:47)
Yeah, a little more than that. Yes ma'am.

Senator Parents: (58:48)
Have any resulted in issues that would suggest any widespread fraud in the presidential election?

Ryan Germany: (58:59)
What we are seeing so far is what I would kind of call the normal amount of... I don't think fraud is the right word. I like to think about it more of kind of legal votes or illegal votes. We have about 300 instances of alleged double voting, people that voted absentee and on Election Day. So we're looking at that. That's significantly down from what happened in the primary based on some protections we put in place. We have about 70 instances of potential felon voting. So that's what we're looking at, but no, we do not. We have not seen anything that would suggest widespread fraud or widespread problems with the voting system.

Senator Parents: (59:46)
No evidence that the machines switched votes?

Ryan Germany: (59:49)
Correct.

Senator Parents: (59:52)
No evidence that the wrong winner was declared-

Ryan Germany: (59:56)
Correct.

Senator Parents: (59:56)
... of the presidential election in Georgia? Isn't there already a procedure for the Secretary of State's office to intervene through your investigators and the state elections board in a county that is not managing an election properly or via a court case? Aren't there two methods by which that can be accomplished?

Ryan Germany: (01:00:23)
So there is. The way it works now is if there's an allegation that a county has not done something properly, we open an investigation. That goes in front of the state election board. The state election board will, if they can concur that's been a violation, refer to the AG's office, and that usually results in a fine to the election board or a consent order where we put in place things to try to fix it. There's not a mechanism basically for state intervention to say, "You know what? You guys keep on failing, so something more needs to change rather than just dealing with in a specific kind of case-by-case interventions."

Senator Parents: (01:01:07)
So there is a method by which changes could be forced and questions could be raised in procedures, but you cannot currently take over an entire county's system?

Ryan Germany: (01:01:22)
I don't know if I would agree with the way you put the first thing, but-

Senator Parents: (01:01:27)
But there a procedure for you to address problems that you have identified in a particular county's management of their elections currently? And if the state elections board agreed with you, then that could happen?

Ryan Germany: (01:01:39)
It goes through the state election board and it's really a kind of post hoc, individualized, here's what needs to be done to fix that one issue.

Senator Parents: (01:01:49)
Thank you. Would you agree that there was a significant decrease in issues reported with Fulton County for the November election versus the June election?

Ryan Germany: (01:02:01)
Yes.

Senator Parent: (01:02:01)
Versus the June election?

Ryan Germany: (01:02:01)
Yes.

Senator Parent: (01:02:06)
One last thing. Is it not the case, I understand your characterization of the left questioning elections after 2018, and the right after 2020, but I want to just raise something, and ask you, and push back a little bit, because is it not the case that there were lawsuits filed that Federal judges agreed with that were showing that eligible voters were unable to cast ballots after 2018, and indeed we changed the law to reflect that right here in 2019, and that here there have not been successful court challenges or evidence raised in the same fashion. Would you agree with me?

Ryan Germany: (01:02:57)
No. I would say in not one single one of those cases after 2018 was a single eligible voter shown not to have been able to vote. You're correct that some Federal judges entered some relief, there was a bunch of court cases brought this year. Some Federal judges entered some relief, then it was stayed by the 11th circuit.

Senator Parent: (01:03:22)
That was different though, because that was like a sort of pre-voting lawsuit that you described earlier. [crosstalk 01:03:31] What I'm saying there was relief granted by Federal judges, after 2018's election, and we don't need to debate it, I just wanted to lay out there that I do believe-

Ryan Germany: (01:03:42)
I will say, from my perspective, in the same place, it is eerie how similar it feels, the allegations made after 2018, and the allegations that are being made now.

Senator Parent: (01:03:54)
Okay. Now I wanted to address one thing that the whip raised. I recall arguing quite strongly in whatever year it was, 2019 I think, that we should purchase a less expensive, more secure system in line with what the computer science experts and others were telling us. That was not agreeable, so it's very interested sitting here now, all these attacks on Dominion. And as you've already stated, there is no evidence that votes were switched, and we were able to look at the readable text. I'm not at all arguing that there's an issue there with the way this election was conducted. But I want to tell the whip, I still believe we could have gotten a less expensive, more secure system, and to the extent that anyone wants to discuss that in the majority party, I would be happy to do so.

Senator Heath: (01:05:09)
Okay. Thank you.

Senator Parent: (01:05:11)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Heath: (01:05:12)
You're welcome. Get that microphone off you, before we drift... No, I'm picking on you.

Senator Parent: (01:05:21)
That's fair.

Senator Heath: (01:05:25)
I'll point out that Senator Parent has been very helpful to me in this process, in trying to get witnesses here, and I appreciate your help. Let me also mention, three more Senators that I'm aware of joining us. Senator-elect Russ Goodman is joining us, Senator-elect Sheila McNeill, and Senator Brandon Beach was in the room just a moment ago. We welcome them as well. Let me also, before I forget again, outside on the table where you can get the affidavits is a list of some other places that you can file reports of election irregularities or observations, or what have you. That is available if members of the committee want a copy of this, we'll be sure to get you one, but just wanted to make that announcement.

Senator Heath: (01:06:31)
I think the next hand that I saw was Senator Robertson, on microphone two, you're recognized.

Senator Robertson: (01:06:40)
Thank you. Mr. Germany, thank you for coming down. I know you guys have been really busy. I appreciate how responsive your office has been. Mr. Teasley is always standing ready when I call him on his cell phone, once he realized that the people using his cell phone

number were actually friends, after a while. I appreciate the effort Mr. Starling has put out as a PIO for eight years. I understand the heat that comes from a lot of these situations. But, you made a comment when you first started discussing the 2018 election, because of the absolute chaos that occurred there, that y'all knew that 2020 would be no exception.

Ryan Germany: (01:07:24)
I would not say that there was absolute chaos in 2018. There was a lot of people making claims, but in terms of the election process, I would say that it was very orderly and regular.

Senator Robertson: (01:07:41)
I'm thinking, inside the silo, it always seems that way. Out amongst the individuals that vote, the constituents that we represent, it's a little more chaotic than that. I think even today, we can say that. As much control as I think your office has shown, the Secretary of State's office has shown, what you guys are getting into the office are a lot of times filtered from what we're experiencing out there. I think that the whip pointed that out perfectly when he talked about going out and having breakfast and coffee with constituents in certain parts, and the information that they receive, and where they receive it from, really doesn't matter, but it causes a lot of chaos and a lot of concern.

Senator Robertson: (01:08:29)
To get to my question, is, knowing that there were issues in 2016 and coming into 2020, what actions did you take? Was there a crisis management plan put together? Because I've sat on a State Board of Elections call, and a member of the board, I believe it was, or it may have been a member of y'all's office, rattled off a dissertation of claims and false claims that were out into the community. And of course he discounted each one with what I believe to be facts that you guys have gathered that these things did not occur, which is very encouraging, but the problem once again, is the audience that you're reaching with that information is very limited.

Senator Robertson: (01:09:24)
My concern is, did y'all put a crisis communication plan together between the two elections? And if so, where did it tear, where did it break? Where our constituents are getting three and fourth and fifth hand information, even from us in some situations. Is there a plan to strengthen that between now and the runoffs?

Ryan Germany: (01:09:48)
That's a great question. I would say, you mentioned the 2018 election, one of the big weaknesses that we found was people were saying stuff that was not true, and then we had a hard time basically breaking through. Now, of course, one big difference in 2018 and 2020 is, in 2018, the mainstream media took these claims and ran with them. In 2020, they're not, but the right wing media is, and that's where some of your constituents obviously get their information.

Ryan Germany: (01:10:21)
What we've seen, in both of them to me is, they're both equally wrong. In 2018, these guys were wrong, in 2020, these guys were wrong. I think you guys have probably seen Secretary Raffensperger's face on TV, we had a plan for trying to get out accurate information, try to get trusted information. We're going to keep doing that. That's part of our updates to you guys. That's part of our twice daily press conferences to the press. I think what's really difficult is when it happened in 2018, and it's happening now, if people don't want to listen to you, it doesn't matter what you're saying.

Senator Robertson: (01:11:10)
Well, and I agree with you, the problem is talking to the mainstream media, you're not communicating with the public. Talking to me in another part, you're not talking to the constituents. Like I said, every time Mr. Starlings got up and gave a press, or whether I understood everything he was saying, I agreed with everything he was saying, but he did an incredible job. I think it's probably beholden on the Secretary of State's office, y'all need to build a communication platform, a plan, to go directly to, because when a constituent asked me about Dominion, which I supported and I still support today and think it was the absolute best equipment out there for this election and for future elections, that when they call me and ask me about it, I refer them to the SOS page so they can read the RFP.

Senator Robertson: (01:12:01)
What I would love to do is when they ask for the questions about all of these conspiracies, y'all have answered a lot of them, like I said, in the State Board of Elections meeting, a lot of them were answered. Put that information out in a professional, cohesive way, so that the almost thousand emails I was getting daily at the beginning of this, my AA, who has been threatened and everything else, can direct people to the experts and get the information directly. That way, we get rid of a lot of this garbage, this kudzu that's out there that we're all getting wrapped up in. Thank you.

Senator Heath: (01:12:37)
Thank you, Senator. Let me give you a little bit of an update where we are, Senator Robertson, I'm actually going to recognize you here in just a second. So, as I said, we've been working for about four weeks on getting people from various counties here to testify today. As the meeting notice stated, we reached out to DeKalb County, to Fulton County, to the Secretary of State's office. After that, Senator Robertson suggested bringing in Muskogee County, he reached out to them, and we had hoped to have them here, but I understand there's been a problem this morning, they will not be able to attend. Can you just share with us sort of what's gone on there very briefly?

Senator Robertson: (01:13:34)
Yeah. They finished up with the recount yesterday, and I think she got an email from the SOS saying that they had to get certification done by the end of business today, so Nancy Boren was going to be in Muskogee County and in Columbus doing that. My whole purpose for inviting Ms. Boren here is that consistently she has recognized as one of the absolute cream

of the crop registrars, dealing with a city of approximately 200,000 people that that can get fairly chaotic during elections. Ms. Boren has just been the absolute example of how elections are managed. My reason for reaching out to the Chairman, and I appreciate him agreeing with me, was to have a standard shown so that we could see those that are failing to reach that standard a little clearer when they talked about how they ran elections. I do apologize, but as professional as she is, she follows advice, and she follows the rules and regulations, and I just appreciate her agreeing to start with, but I completely understand why she wasn't able to be here.

Senator Heath: (01:14:48)
Thank you.

Ryan Germany: (01:14:48)
Nancy Boren is undoubtedly one of the best election directors in our state.

Senator Heath: (01:14:53)
I thought, for that reason, it would be good to hear from her. Also, here's where we stand, Fulton County, I'm having a little bit of trouble keeping up with this, but Fulton County is here. They're going to present to us. We had three hours allocated for our meeting. We're approaching an hour and a half into the meeting. My plan is to continue, if you guys will give us another 17 minutes, we'll continue with some question and answer with the Secretary of State, and we're going to bring in Fulton County. We'll go through the same process with them. Senator Seay, you had asked to be recognized. I want to get your questions, if you will, and then I've got a few that I think would be good for the whole that I'd like to pose. Senator Seay, you're recognized.

Senator Seay: (01:15:53)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, first and foremost, for requiring masks in our meeting. I really do appreciate that. I thank you all, because it makes a world of difference when you're talking nationally, how Georgia looks. I want to take us back for a second, I was elected to the House and I got my training, and I came to the Senate, and that's the year that Georgians elected a Democratic Senate, but a Republican Governor, who was Sonny Perdue. We can't forget we got four switchers that changed the voters input at that time. The voters had elected a Democratic Senate, but we have four switchers to switch, and that made it Republican. Through that era, I've still been here, but one of the things I heard in your presentation, or somebody mentioned, about the big change. I know Clayton County, where I live and represent, is part of that change.

Senator Seay: (01:17:10)
I want everybody to know we worked hard turning out the vote in Clayton County. Terrell Star, if you remember him, Bill Lee, strong Democrats, Clayton County is strong Democrats, but working in the grassroots and working hard, turning out the vote, helped get us to where

we are today. I hear fraud and innuendos and all these other things, but the real deal is work. Turnout makes a huge difference when you can wake folk up and give them a reason to understand how important the vote is to all of us.

Senator Seay: (01:17:51)
I just wanted to make sure that you all know that I really appreciate what you all are doing because I have been part of leadership and a lot of national, because I started on the school board in Clayton County, back in the nineties, where I met and built relationships, and to have those folks texting and calling me talking about Georgia gives me great pride, and you all play a big role in that. All the innuendos, we didn't go through all of that when we got four switchers to undo what the voters had done. Well, some of them didn't get reelected the next cycle, but we had a strong Secretary of State with Kathy Cox. We have had Democrats, and it's been a long process for me personally-

Senator Heath: (01:18:49)
Senator, do you got a question-

Senator Seay: (01:18:53)
But here, my question is, are we going to make sure that we don't just take it just because of the noise makers? That's my question.

Ryan Germany: (01:19:00)
I would say we're doing the same thing that we have been doing since 2018, even before when people have started challenging the accuracy and the results of our elections. We just have different people mad at us right now.

Senator Seay: (01:19:17)
Thank you for your integrity.

Senator Heath: (01:19:20)
Okay. I want to move as quickly as I can, I'm going to take a little bit of the Chair's prerogative. I think I got some questions that'll be beneficial for the public to hear your response to. To try to move quickly, I'm going to sort of rattle these off at one time. We don't need a lengthy answer, but I think these are-

Ryan Germany: (01:19:43)
That's the second time someone's said that today to me.

Senator Heath: (01:19:50)
If you will, just talk to us once again about the signatures required for absentee ballots, how that process goes about, to get an absentee ballot and how that ballot is verified, if you will, when we receive it. I think that what you said was there is a bi-partisan election board, and those people have an opportunity to review those before the envelope is opened, and if they challenge it, it goes into a challenge pile, and there's a cure period for that. I'd like for you to run through that real quickly. I think it's also important, sort of relative to that, for you to

mention the "My Voter" page, how people can check the status of their absentee ballots, whether they've been received, or if perhaps someone has voted on their behalf prior to the election, if that happens.

Senator Heath: (01:20:46)
Then, I've had questions about going through and validating these absentee ballots. As I understand the process, I think I'm clear on this, once that absentee ballot has been opened and that paper ballot is put in the stack, we don't know which... just touch on that, that we can't, even if at this point, post-election, you go through and you say, "Oh, well, this person should not have voted. This was an illegal ballot," whether or not you can reverse that, or pull that ballot out of the count.

Senator Heath: (01:21:21)
Then, when an absentee ballot is requested, where is it mailed? Is it mailed to the address that's on file for the voter? Or could I say, "Oh, well, I'm off on vacation in Minnesota, and I need you to mail my ballot to some other location other than the one on file."

Senator Heath: (01:21:42)
And then finally, because we all do get requests to have a lot of things investigated, talk to us just a little bit about the requirements, the staffing, what you've got available to you. How long, if you can speculate a bit, on how many man hours are invested in an investigation of a single allegation, how you try to group them together to pursue. Just give us some feel about those, if you can.

Ryan Germany: (01:22:12)
Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the signature process, the way that works in Georgia, is first someone submits an absentee ballot application. The signature on that application has to be matched with their signature on file before they're ever sent a ballot. If it's not signed, they're not sent a ballot. If that signature doesn't match, they're sent a provisional ballot, and before it counts, they've got to come in, sign an affidavit and show their photo ID. That's the first step.

Ryan Germany: (01:22:47)
If the signature does match on the application, the voter is mailed a ballot. I'll jump to one of your other questions, it can be mailed to their address on file, or a temporary out of county address. We did have that this year, where people were quarantining in places besides their regular address. You can mail it to a different address out of county. You cannot mail it to a different address in the same county. That's the restriction there, if you're going to be in your same county, you've got to be getting it at your registered address.

Ryan Germany: (01:23:29)
When the absentee ballot is mailed, it comes back, that absentee ballot envelope is signed on the back, voter's name, and it's signed on the back. If it's not signed, or the signature doesn't

match, then that generates a cure notice that says, "Hey, your signature didn't match. Here's the problem."

Ryan Germany: (01:23:50)
What we have seen from previous investigations is when the signature didn't match, it was generally the voter. For some reason, their signature had changed over the years. It might've been a case where they got married, they had a new name, signature was different. That's why we put in place the cure process, to uphold that signature match requirement and strengthen it. When the ballot comes back in, it's matched off of all of the signatures that are available, especially if there's a question. For most of them, there's no question. You look at it, it clearly matches, you're good.

Ryan Germany: (01:24:37)
If there's a question, then you expand it, and you look at everything you've got available to see what's going on here. That could be the application, the signatures on file, other signatures they might have. That's how that works. Then, once it's matched, you're correct Mr. Chairman, the envelope is separated, and it's kept, and they're available, they're kept for 24 months. The ballot itself is in another envelope, it's not marked, and that's separated, and sent to basically to get ready to be counted when that time comes. That's because we have a constitutional right in Georgia to a secret ballot. They verify that it's you, and then they separate your ballot so they don't get to see who you voted for.

Senator Heath: (01:25:26)
Talk about "My Voter" page.

Ryan Germany: (01:25:27)
Yes, sir. The "My Voter" page, if you go to mvp.sos.ga.gov, you can look up where you're registered to vote, and your precinct. You can also look up your absentee ballot status. It tells you if you've requested an absentee ballot, if the application has been accepted yet, and then when you mail your ballot back in, it tells you if your balance been accepted. You can check that, and that's the case whether you vote by mail or early in person, you can go check and make sure, "Okay, yeah, here I am," as having voted.

Ryan Germany: (01:26:08)
The other thing that we put in place this year is a system called "Ballot Tracks" you could sign up for. I recommended this to my parents and my wife who voted absentee, they were getting concerned about, "Oh, did my absentee ballot count?" They signed up for Ballot Tracks, right when it got accepted, they got a text saying, "Hey, you're ballot's been accepted. You're good." You can sign up for that process as well.

Ryan Germany: (01:26:31)
All of those things help increase security and confidence, people can know this is how my vote has been treated. All this is, is a bunch of individual votes put together. To constituents

that are concerned, I would say, "Sign up for these things, sign up for Ballot Tracks, if you want to vote absentee, so you can make sure that you know how your ballot's being handled."

Senator Heath: (01:26:54)
Talk to us just briefly about the investigation, that burden or workload, if you will.

Ryan Germany: (01:27:00)
We have 23 investigators. Since the November election, we have opened over 250 investigations. In voting, it really does require individualized inquiries. You see things on Twitter generally about, "Oh, here's what I've found," and it's kind of a list without an individualized inquiry. To do a real investigation, we talk to the people involved, if it's an out of state voter, we go to the address that they say is their home address and we see are they associated with that address still? Those are the things that we're doing, and it is time consuming. We do triage them to try to get the most important ones first. We'll continue to do that, our investigators are working as hard as they can to make sure that everything that's questionable is investigated as quickly as possible.

Senator Heath: (01:28:05)
Thank you. Is there anything that, I mean, clearly the legislature is not in session, the appropriations process has taken place and been approved, but is there additional resources that, well, let me just let me do it this way. I feel like we have extended that opportunity to the Secretary, but if there's things that the legislature can do to help out in the meantime, please let us know.

Ryan Germany: (01:28:34)
Thank you, sir.

Senator Heath: (01:28:35)
In interest of time, I've about used up the rest of the time, Senator Dolezal had asked to be recognized, and I wanted to go to him. We are trying to move to Fulton County at 11, so try to prioritize as best you can.

Senator Dolezal: (01:28:49)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Heath: (01:28:51)
Which microphone are you?

Senator Dolezal: (01:28:54)
Microphone five.

Senator Heath: (01:28:54)
Five.

Senator Dolezal: (01:28:54)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ryan. I'll go quickly. Do you know what hash algorithm was used on the machines? Was it MD5, SHA256? [crosstalk 00:27: 03].

Ryan Germany: (01:29:03)
I believe it was SHA256, but I'll have to get with you individually to confirm them.

Senator Dolezal: (01:29:07)
Was the entire drive hashed?

Ryan Germany: (01:29:11)
I'm going to have to get some different people with-

Senator Dolezal: (01:29:14)
Fair enough, unless the entire drive is-

Ryan Germany: (01:29:16)
I'm the lawyer.

Senator Dolezal: (01:29:18)
Understood. Unless the entire drive was hashed, unless you had source code to review, what we've done so far is inconclusive.

Ryan Germany: (01:29:26)
I'm happy to send you that, and then we can take any feedback to improve those techniques going forward.

Senator Dolezal: (01:29:32)
Thank you. What's the first line of review for the signature match? Who is the person, or group of people, who review a signature in the Elections Office?

Ryan Germany: (01:29:39)
Good question. The bi-partisan boards I mentioned, they have the power to appoint Election's Directors, like Nancy Boren in Muskogee County, and then absentee ballot clerks. It's handled at a staff level in each county.

Senator Dolezal: (01:29:54)
What type of training do they have?

Ryan Germany: (01:29:57)
The way training works in Georgia is, we train the county election directors, and then they train their staff. We did provide GBI training to every county elections director on signature matching at the end of last year.

Senator Dolezal: (01:30:14)
I think you know I've expressed some concerns about your settlement agreement, but one thing that's in the settlement agreement that has not been mentioned, anywhere that I've seen, is that you agreed to allow and consider in good faith, providing county registrars and absentee ballot clerks additional guidance and training materials to follow when comparing voter signatures, that'll be drafted by the political party committees, and to clarify who the political party committees are, the Democrat party of Georgia, the DSCC, and the DCCC.

Ryan Germany: (01:30:44)
They did submit additional guidance for us to consider. We considered it and did not send it to county to utilize it for training.

Senator Dolezal: (01:30:55)
Thank you. Could you get us a copy of that?

Ryan Germany: (01:30:56)
Sure.

Senator Dolezal: (01:30:57)
Thank you. Was there electronic software available for signature match and was it used? Or were there any counties that did not use it? It's my understanding that the Fulton Republican Board of Electors did not certify the election primarily because the electronic tools that were available for the signature match were not used.

Ryan Germany: (01:31:21)
I know Fulton County was looking at what they could do electronically. There was nothing prohibiting them from using electronic means to check signatures. I know they were trying to do some additional things, where they wanted us to give access to bots, to the voter registration system, to do some of that work, and we said "Mo, you can't do that," but there was nothing prohibiting them from doing electronic. Do you know if they actually did electronic signature verification?

Speaker 1: (01:31:48)
At one point they were considering it. I honestly don't know if they executed it. I think they do not.

Senator Dolezal: (01:31:53)
Is what I've heard, about the Republicans not voting to certify because of that in Fulton County, accurate?

Speaker 1: (01:31:59)
I've not heard that.

Ryan Germany: (01:32:01)
We know they did not vote to certify. I had heard the reasons were some concerns about absentee ballot signatures. We're going to have investigators follow up with them to see what specifically, so we can investigate those issues.

Senator Dolezal: (01:32:14)
You mentioned earlier, and I wrote it down that it's a lot to ask of these election officials to go through the volume of absentee ballot signatures that we've asked them to go through, and you mentioned that the Secretary does not think that signature match is the best way to verify somebody's identity. Given those two things, and given really the massive shift toward ABM in this election, in particular resulted in 1.3 million signatures having to be approved, why not look at the signatures, and have a third-party look at the signatures, to help guide us, and help inform us, as to whether or not your assertion is accurate? That it is a lot to ask of them, whether the Secretary's assertion is accurate, that it's not the best way, and to give us the tools in our tool belt so that we know looking forward, whether we got it right, or whether we need to change it?

Ryan Germany: (01:33:02)
We are looking at that, from-

Senator Dolezal: (01:33:03)
Do we need to change it?

Ryan Germany: (01:33:03)
So, we are looking at that from any individualized specific complaint that we get. We're looking at it. I think what people are asking us to do is let's just look at all of the 1.6 million, because there were some that weren't returned. Frankly, I'm not sure that's something we have the authority to do. I don't think that's appropriate because we open our investigations based off of actionable complaints, and I think as we do that, we will get information that we're happy to share about how this process worked.

Senator Dolezal: (01:33:37)
To date, how many signatures have you all reviewed?

Ryan Germany: (01:33:40)
So, we haven't gotten to that part yet. First, we get a complaint. We look at our system to see... The main complaints we're reviewing regarding the signatures are, "I didn't vote absentee. I didn't request an absentee ballot, but when I showed up, they said I had." So what we look at, I say, okay, did they actually request an absentee? Like I said, what we're seeing, what we've seen almost every time is they were on the rollover list. They had request one earlier in the year, and they got one for this year because they had requested it, and they were in that bucket. And then I believe we have also... Then we go to the County and say, "Hey, give us these documents." So that's where we are, to do the signature match. Give us the

envelope or give us the voter registration stuff on file, so we can look at that. Actually wouldn't be an envelope, it'd be an application, but give us those documents so we can review them.

Senator Dolezal: (01:34:32)
I'm sure some people have, I haven't suggested looking at all 1.3 million. I think it would be valuable, highly valuable to pull a random sampling from multiple counties in the state, just to know how close we got it. And to put that into the hands of people who have been trained, have experience in handwriting analysis. The last [crosstalk 01:34:52]

Ryan Germany: (01:34:52)
The point that I would make on that too is, I think the point that you're probably suggesting is what we would do then if it doesn't match is follow up with the voter to see, "Hey, did you sign this?" Because it's not really the point of did it match or not. The point is, did that voter sign it or not?

Senator Dolezal: (01:35:10)
Well, the point is that they should have been sent a provisional ballot. That's the point, is that that ballot should not have been accepted, and that ballot never should have been counted. The point would be is that the system failed us. And we have potentially, to your point, we don't know conclusively, even if the signature doesn't match. What we do know conclusively the signature does not match, is that that should've been a provisional ballot, not a ballot that was accepted.

Senator Dolezal: (01:35:33)
You mentioned earlier that we send ballots out of county, if you move out of county. I pulled for the three counties who were supposed to be here today, Fulton, Muscogee, and DeKalb. We had about 20,000 ballots from those three counties alone sent out of state. Do you know how many ballots, absentee ballots, for the entire state were mailed to addresses outside of the state of Georgia?

Ryan Germany: (01:35:57)
No, but we can get that for.

Senator Dolezal: (01:35:59)
Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Heath: (01:36:07)
Okay. Here's where we are. As we said earlier, as we've worked to put this meeting together, things have changed, different responsibilities have bubbled up, if you will. Fulton County has some representatives here. I'm not sure at this point that we actually have someone from the elections board from Fulton County here. So I'm going to, in defense of you guys, I'm

looking at Mr. [Teasley 01:36:43] in the back. We're trying to get someone from the elections board at Fulton County here to... Understand they have work to do today. Do you guys want to go for a little bit longer, or do we want to go to the [crosstalk 00:04:01].

Speaker 2: (01:37:00)
Mr. Chairman, I have some questions [inaudible 01:37:04].

Senator Heath: (01:37:04)
I know we got some questions, and I would love to do that. And I think this is very fruitful. We had told Fulton County 11 o'clock. They're struggling to get here. I think they are willing to come in a few minutes later. I just didn't want to take [crosstalk 00:04:17].

Ryan Germany: (01:37:17)
We're happy to stay as long as you guys want.

Senator Heath: (01:37:20)
Okay.

Ryan Germany: (01:37:23)
These guys might have to go, but I can stay. So you'll lose some of the knowledge.

Senator Heath: (01:37:26)
Okay. Well, that's what we'll do then. So I've seen Senator Harper indicate a question. Senator Jordan. Who else am I missing? And Senator Harbin. Okay. I'm sorry, Mr. Rules Chairman, you're not a member of the committee. You'll be last, but you can ask me a question.

Senator Heath: (01:38:01)
All right. So I'm going to go to Senator Jordan at this point. She can reconcile that with the rules chairman at some point down the road, how she got chosen over the rules chairman. You're recognized.

Senator Jordan: (01:38:19)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Germany, from your remarks, it seems that the use of secure drop boxes was significant for the 11th circuit's ruling that absentee ballots postmarked by election day, but received after election day, could not be counted. Is that correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:38:36)
Based on my reading of it, yes ma'am.

Senator Jordan: (01:38:37)
Okay. And with respect to that then, in terms of drop box use as the secretary of state, are those going to continue to be utilized through the runoff?

Ryan Germany: (01:38:46)
Yes ma'am.

Senator Jordan: (01:38:47)
And do you have any idea if going forward they would be utilized?

Ryan Germany: (01:38:54)
Going forward, through the runoff, yes. It's emergency rule passed due to COVID, it's been extended through that time. Going forward, I think the state election board and the general assembly can look at that and see, is that something that we want to continue going forward.

Senator Jordan: (01:39:11)
Okay. And then in terms of the drop boxes, it's my understanding that there was a pretty significant financial investment made in these because of the 24 hour video surveillance and all of the security apparatus that were put around it. Is that your understanding as well?

Ryan Germany: (01:39:32)
Yes. We were able to provide some reimbursement of that through different federal money to the counties, and I think they were also able to get some other grants for that, but that's correct. There was significant resources.

Senator Jordan: (01:39:46)
And as you stand here today, is there any evidence that any absentee ballots were not submitted by a registered voter?

Ryan Germany: (01:39:57)
I don't know, one way or the other.

Senator Jordan: (01:39:59)
Okay. I want to go back to the application thing because approximately a million people have now applied for an absentee ballot in the runoff. Of course, a huge segment of those are from the rollover list, correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:40:14)
About 600,000 or from the rollover list is correct.

Senator Jordan: (01:40:18)
Yeah. And so really, we're talking about maybe 400,000 extra. But for purposes of the public, applications are not ballots, correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:40:27)
That's correct.

Senator Jordan: (01:40:28)
And in terms of the process with respect to an application, you have a signature on the application, but there's also other identifying information with respect to the voter that is also cross-checked by each of the county election boards. Correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:40:43)
Correct. First they've got to be able to identify the voter. So, the voter's name and address, date of birth are all listed, and they use that to identify is this voter registered? That's how they find a signature to verify. And there are some applications that are rejected because this is not a registered voter. So that is the first step. That's correct.

Senator Jordan: (01:41:04)
And so with respect to the signature check that's at issue here, the signature that gets pulled up as the signature that is from the registered voter's Georgia driver's license or Georgia ID card, is that correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:41:17)
Correct, or from their initial voter registration application.

Senator Jordan: (01:41:20)
Right. But they are the voter's signature, correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:41:26)
Correct. Yes.

Senator Jordan: (01:41:27)
And in terms of the instances where they have not matched, isn't it true that usually it is because of some disability or infirmity that has happened to the voter? For example, someone gets Parkinson's disease, and so their signature becomes shaky. Is that your understanding?

Ryan Germany: (01:41:48)
I can't speak to the why. I know, and what we have seen in the past when we have gone and done investigations on that clearly didn't match, the investigation showed, okay, this voter did sign this. These were both the voter signatures, even though they don't match. I can't speak to why that was the case.

Senator Jordan: (01:42:08)
And I want to get back to something you said, because I thought it was a really important point earlier with respect to Senator Dolezal, which was in terms of the signature match, it really is just... What you're trying to do is to verify that this is a registered, lawful voter in the state of Georgia. That's correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:42:27)
Well, you're trying to identify that it's that individual registered lawful voter, not a, but that specific one.

Senator Jordan: (01:42:34)
Right. But that's the whole intent of this.

Ryan Germany: (01:42:36)
Correct.

Senator Jordan: (01:42:36)
The intent is not just to try to throw ballots out, because that's why you have the cure process in place, correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:42:42)
Correct.

Senator Jordan: (01:42:43)
Because even if the signatures don't match, there is a process where the county elections board then reaches out to the putative voter and says, "Look, we don't know if this is you or not. You're going to have to come in here. You're going to have to sign an affidavit. You're going to have to show us your identification." Correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:42:58)
Correct. And we expect this year, because as this is the first real election that that has been in place, that we will see a lower amount of rejected absentee ballots due to that cure process. And I think that's a good thing.

Senator Jordan: (01:43:12)
And so just to close the circle a little bit on this application thing, because there's been a lot of misinformation out there that somehow these are votes that someone's collecting and sending into these various county offices. These are applications where individual voters have to provide identifying information and a signature, that then is used to verify whether or not they are lawful voter in the state of Georgia. Correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:43:37)
Correct.

Senator Jordan: (01:43:38)
And at that point in time, an absentee ballot would be sent to that voter. And if that voter sends that absentee ballot back, then there is another check on the signature to make sure that that signature matches the application, but also the signature that is in the state system. Is that correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:43:56)
Correct.

Senator Jordan: (01:43:57)
Thank you.

Senator Heath: (01:44:02)
Okay. Here's where we stand. Due to official obligations outside of the capitol, the Fulton County elections director is not going to be able to be here today. Ms. Jessica Corbett Dominguez, who is director of external affairs, is in the hallway, and she's willing to present... I think what we're doing right here is very important, and what I will offer to the committee, I would ask you all, committee members, to get back to me and about your thoughts of having another meeting with these election directors, maybe others, if you have suggestions, at a later time. And I apologize it didn't work today, but it definitely has been a moving target. So you all get back to me about that and availability on times. And if that's what the committee wants to do, we could certainly do that later.

Senator Heath: (01:45:05)
I also want to point out that Senator-Elect Clint Dixon has joined us some time ago. Haven't been able to keep up with that completely, but I'm going to go to the vice chair, Senator Harbin next. And then I've got Senator Harper. And if there's anyone, haven't forgot about our illustrious rules chairman sitting down here. How can you forget about him? [crosstalk 01:45:33] Yeah, that's right. I won't have any bills to [crosstalk 01:45:36].

Speaker 2: (01:45:35)
Short one at the end?

Senator Heath: (01:45:40)
Maybe so.

Speaker 2: (01:45:40)
Thank you.

Senator Heath: (01:45:41)
So with that, I'm going to recognize Vice-Chairman Harbin.

Senator Harbin: (01:45:47)
Thank you Mr. Chairman. Ryan, thank you for answering all of our questions and the things that are there. I think the biggest thing is this is that we look at a game, at a football game. If it's zero to 44, we're not too concerned about who the winner is. In this case, we're looking at 0.28, and that concerns me when it's such a small margin that we're dealing with. Number one question I need to ask is that I understand that in one of the precincts that represents in my district, that on the day before the election, there were updates being done to the

machines because of the Senate race with 24 candidates, the machine was having problems in printing that. Is that a true statement, that those were being updated on the day before the election?

Ryan Germany: (01:46:28)
No. Is this Spalding County? Or where is it-

Senator Harbin: (01:46:31)
I'm going to get to Spalding, but this was in Fayette County. I understood that there were people coming in with USB drives to update machines the day before the election.

Ryan Germany: (01:46:39)
We did update the machines to handle how that Senate race appeared. It was based on something that was found when counties did logic and accuracy testing. So in Georgia, we have a really robust logic and accuracy testing, to make sure before the election, the machines work like they're supposed to. They found something that was... it was a one in a million thing that they found it. So our election directors, the fact that they found it, I think is just to their credit. We were able to put in a fix for that, to make sure it didn't happen. It was not the day before the election. It was a couple of weeks at least, or maybe... I can get you the exact date, but no, nothing would have been changed the night before the election.

Senator Harbin: (01:47:23)
One of our precincts has things working on, I understand the day before, they were there working on. So that was a concern. I know that in the audit process, we found votes that were on chips. And when we start getting down to, like I said, photo finishes, we don't have instant replay. There were in the first audit, we found votes that were still left on chips. Am I correct?

Ryan Germany: (01:47:43)
On memory cards. Yes, senator that's correct. [crosstalk 01:47:45].

Senator Harbin: (01:47:45)
That were not handled, so that issue comes into play. And in Spalding County, if you would, I know that there has been the request for the resignation of the supervisor there. Could you expand upon what y'all found in Spalding County? Because that's a concern to me because the machines were down on election day, things of that nature that I got a lot of calls on. And even this, one county matters because of the narrowness of what's going on.

Ryan Germany: (01:48:13)
So the first point you made is exactly right. We have narrow margins here. And so that's why everything we're looking at to bring to you guys in the next month is based off of that. And when you have narrow margins, the media asked if, after the election, are you seeing any evidence of widespread fraud? Are you seeing any evidence of widespread fraud? And our response was we don't have a widespread margin. So that's not really the goalpost. We have to look at every single thing because that's how everyone on both sides has confidence in the

results. And this year was more difficult because of the huge increase in absentee ballots. As Senator Dolezal brought up, that's what changed this year, the massive increase in the number of absentee ballots.

Ryan Germany: (01:49:02)
Spalding County in particular, I guess I'll start, and if I don't get it right, you guys can jump in. What happened there was an improper loading of the poll pads. So that's what's used to check in when you go vote. Not the voting machines, this verifies who the voter is, and they weren't creating the cards correctly. It should be caught during, during LNA testing. For some reason, it wasn't. She had said they were updating the night before. We've went back and checked. It's not true. They shouldn't have been doing that, and they weren't. So I'm not really sure why she said that.

Ryan Germany: (01:49:44)
But there's a very easy fix to that, which is you go straight to the machine, and there's another way to pull up the ballot through putting in an activation code. They did not do that seamlessly. We had to remind them about that. Once we did, I think they got everything back, up and running, but [crosstalk 01:50:07] Oh yeah, that's the other thing. So, they were short of emergency ballots, so that slowed things down for them when that happened.

Senator Harbin: (01:50:18)
Okay. Understanding one county can make this election and flip it either way, and that's why my concern is that we need to know what happened there, and that those votes, the right votes were counted. My last part is this, is that military votes, votes that went to PO boxes, addresses that were out of state, is there an audit process for that, that we can confirm that military votes were counted and accounted for? And also that those that went to PO boxes, as I understand it, are not eligible if they go to a PO box or a mail center. Am I on that, sir?

Ryan Germany: (01:50:50)
So you can't have a PO box or a mail center as your resident registered address. That's what you can't have because you don't live there. You can have a ballot mailed to there, if that's your mailing address. That happens a lot in our rural counties, where they get mail at a PO box, but you cannot have a PO box as your registered address. And that's something that we look at and are continuing to look at. What makes it a little difficult now is there are places where you can get an address that's a mail center, that it doesn't say PO box. It looks like a regular address, but that is something we're looking at.

Senator Harbin: (01:51:28)
Okay. And last thing is I understand that when the first audit was done, we had 52 counties who had no change, that stayed the same across the board. There was no change at all.

Ryan Germany: (01:51:42)
Do y'all remember?

Gabriel Sterling: (01:51:43)
[inaudible 01:51:40].

Senator Harbin: (01:51:45)
Is that statistically probable when we have that issue in other areas? Just curious.

Senator Heath: (01:51:54)
Just for the record, identify yourself when you-

Gabriel Sterling: (01:51:56)
Sorry, what?

Senator Heath: (01:51:57)
For the record, give us-

Gabriel Sterling: (01:51:58)
I'm Gabriel Sterling.

Senator Heath: (01:52:04)
I don't think anybody doesn't know you [crosstalk 01:52:05]

Gabriel Sterling: (01:52:04)
I'm with the Secretary of State's office. I'm the voting system implementation manager for Georgia. When we did the forensic hand audit, the hand tabulation, normally... We had a university study from Rice University that says a normal hand tabulation should be 1% to 2% off, as a question of scale, on average. However, all those studies historically had been done on hand marked paper ballots. And as we know, that's where variability can come in, in terms of adjudication. So that's one of the big parts about that.

Gabriel Sterling: (01:52:32)
The 52 counties tended to be smaller counties, so you had less likelihood of having those variabilities come into place. And they generally were ones that had wider margins. So we didn't see that much change. Now, overall in the entire state, we saw 0.1053% off in the overall number of ballots and 0.0099% off in the margin, which essentially shows that the system worked.

Gabriel Sterling: (01:52:57)
Now as Mr. Germany pointed out, 25% of the ballots were hand marked and 75% were on BMDs, which goes back to the rationale as to why the secretary prefers BMDs. There is zero ambiguity as to what the voter's intent is. And most the variability we do see was when they were doing the stacking, they were doing the stacks of 10 and alternate them. And human beings being human beings, sometimes there were nine, sometimes there were 11, they balanced out sometimes. And sometimes the last one, there might've been two or three off. So that's where those changes came from. And again, many were live streamed. They had monitors there. We were happier the closer we were to having no differences, but

statistically, it's not impossible. We just have really good elections directors who were very tired at this point. But I think that goes to the answer there, the fact that we had variability shows it's a hand recount involving people doing the best they can.

Senator Harbin: (01:53:48)
All right. Thank you. I just think that the biggest thing I see is we've got to give people the truth for them to have trust in our system. And that's why that's important, but thank you.

Gabriel Sterling: (01:53:57)
And this office has done everything it can to be transparent and truthful throughout the process.

Senator Harbin: (01:54:01)
Thank you.

Senator Heath: (01:54:02)
Okay. We need to move along as quickly as possible, but I'm going to re recognize Senator Harper.

Senator Harper: (01:54:09)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And first off, Mr. Chairman, I just want to say thank you for calling the hearing today and to our Senate caucus and our Senate leadership for their participation in making this happen. It's good to be with all of you today. I think it's imperative and important, I know I want to echo a lot of what some of my colleagues have said. We have heard from a lot of our constituents, and I think that's why we're here. And I appreciate all of you being here today, just to answer questions so we can have this open dialogue, because I think it's important to have a transparent process where we're able to ask the questions that we're being asked on a consistent basis. And we can ask it in a way where everyone can hear the answers to those questions. And hopefully, in some cases, in some of the things you've alluded to, we can rectify some of the issues that may be false, that are out there, and that those concerns that may not be false, we can get answers to address and see what we can do as a legislative body to address those going forward.

Senator Harper: (01:55:12)
So I want to start off by saying this. I think I, and I can speak for everyone here today, and I think the pro-tem alluded to this. We do condemn the personal attacks on each of you. I don't support those. I think those are uncalled for, and anything we can do to support you in those efforts, we want you to know that we have your back because we don't think that those are appropriate, regardless of who you are and regardless of what office you hold. But we know that there's a lot of of excitement right now in this process, and I think all of you know that.

Senator Harper: (01:55:54)
But that said, just some things that I've been asked from some of my constituents, and I think just reiterating some of the things that have already been asked, to pro-tem referred to the

ballot drop boxes. On the video footage that we have that is required in regards to the drop boxes, you said that is reviewed. How often is that reviewed? Do we review all of that footage? Is there a process to do that, or is that something you're continually working through?

Ryan Germany: (01:56:22)
We review it upon request.

Senator Harper: (01:56:23)
Okay.

Ryan Germany: (01:56:24)
If we get a complaint, or if there's an issue, then we ask for it. Going back to what I was talking about earlier, how remember in each county, there's a bipartisan board of elections. They can choose to review that as often as they want. And for signature matching, they can choose to be as involved in that as they want, and we encourage that.

Senator Harper: (01:56:48)
Okay. On the ballot drop boxes, is there a verifiable chain of custody from the time that box is picked up, taken to the warehouse or wherever it is taken to, until that ballot box is open to be counted?

Ryan Germany: (01:57:05)
Yes. So the regulation requires that at least two people who were sworn deputy registrars pick up those ballots, count them, put them in a sealed container, fill out a chain of custody form, deliver it to the county elections office. At that point, they confirm the number of ballots, and then fill out the chain of custody form that has been delivered.

Senator Harper: (01:57:36)
So at that time, we...

Ryan Germany: (01:57:39)
And the ballot canter has to be sealed, also.

Senator Harper: (01:57:42)
So at that time that that is done, we know how many ballots are in that drop box when it is taken to that place. So there is a count of those number of ballots at that particular time.

Ryan Germany: (01:57:52)
Correct.

Senator Harper: (01:57:53)
Okay. So regardless of how long it may take us to count ballots, we know how many ballots we may or may not be counting in the next couple of hours during that time period. Is that...

Ryan Germany: (01:58:05)
So for drop boxes, yes, that's correct. And you're talking about for when they close them up at 7:00 PM on election night because they're emptying them every day and bringing them in. On election night, be able to have that count. And then there's also ones that come in to the office by that time, 7:00 PM, just through the mail process. There would not be a count on those, but they would be counted as well.

Senator Harper: (01:58:33)
Understood. Thank you. I agree with Senator Dolezal in regards to the signature match, audit, and verification issues, and a lot of what he discussed in that regard. And I know you've already answered those questions, but I think you hit on a really good point in the fact that making sure the person that sent in that absentee ballot is actually the person that signed that absentee ballot. Is there a process, do you have a process, or are we working on a process, where we can audit that particular provision, other than auditing the actual signature itself? I think it would be just as important to audit the signature verification to make sure that person actually did sign that ballot. Is that something we do, are we looking at doing, or is that something we need to work on going forward?

Ryan Germany: (01:59:27)
I'm not sure I follow. Is that separate from the [crosstalk 01:59:30] signature verification?

Senator Harper: (01:59:31)
Yes. It would be separate from the signature verification. You mentioned earlier in your response to Senator Dolezal in regards to signature verification, the best way to verify signatures is to verify that the person that sent in that absentee ballot is actually the person that signed said absentee ballot.

Ryan Germany: (01:59:49)
Yes.

Senator Harper: (01:59:49)
Is there a way that we audit that to make sure that that is taken place maybe in a sample audit of some sort or a random audit?

Ryan Germany: (01:59:56)
The way we do that right now in Georgia law is through the signature verification. I think what we're looking at and what we will bring to you guys shortly is what we think are possible better ways to do that, going forward.

Senator Harper: (02:00:09)
Okay. So you're looking to bring us some suggested changes on how we can tighten that up. And I know the secretary has stated he would like to see some sort of ID provision in regards to absentee ballots. And I would support that.

Senator Heath: (02:00:22)
Senator, if you will wrap it up. [crosstalk 02:00:25] one more.

Senator Harper: (02:00:25)
I'll get to some of the meat of the questions that I have then, really quick. I had a list of them, Mr. Chairman, but I'll [crosstalk 02:00:34].

Senator Heath: (02:00:34)
One more question, but I'm sure the secretary of state will receive your questions [crosstalk 02:00:38].

Senator Harper: (02:00:38)
If I could get a couple, I have a couple that I think I need to [crosstalk 02:00:38] I'll be really fast.

Senator Heath: (02:00:38)
You're eating into Senator Gooch's time [crosstalk 02:00:46].

Senator Harper: (02:00:38)
I'll do it really fast. Senator Parent referenced a couple of rulings from 2018. Do we know what President appointed those judges that made those rulings?

Ryan Germany: (02:00:59)
Yes, sir. For all the rulings that went against us in pre-2018, they were appointed by President Obama.

Senator Harper: (02:01:07)
So there were President Obama appointed judges that issued rulings that went against the state of Georgia. Is that correct? Okay. I just wanted to put that out there.

Senator Harper: (02:01:15)
In regards to the consent agreement that was made in March, was the Georgia GOP involved in that process?

Ryan Germany: (02:01:24)
We've been fortunate to have some of the best election lawyers in the country representing us, and our lawyer in that process is also the general counsel for the state Republican party.

Senator Harper: (02:01:35)
So the lawyer that works for the GOP was involved, just not necessarily the GOP in general.

Ryan Germany: (02:01:43)
Correct.

Senator Harper: (02:01:43)
Okay. And just in regards to the consent agreement, why did the secretary of state or your office feel that you had the authority to sign that agreement, when in fact, the US Constitution and the Georgia Constitution leaves authority to make changes in regards to state law, that is left up to the general assembly to determine. What led you to believe you had the authority to make that agreement with the democratic party?

Ryan Germany: (02:02:15)
So we don't believe that changed law at all. The first thing in that agreement is you have to verify signatures, and if you don't, you follow the law. That's what it says. And I spend a lot of my time defending the laws you guys pass. A lot of it. And I take it very seriously. So I disagree with the premise of your question.

Senator Harper: (02:02:47)
Understood. I understand [crosstalk 02:02:50] okay.

Senator Heath: (02:02:50)
I have respect to the witnesses waiting outside. We've got to move on. Senator Gooch, I'm going go to you on microphone three. Please make it quick.

Senator Gooch: (02:03:00)
I will try to do much better. A quarter of the votes cast on November 3rd or leading up to November 3rd were signature verified ballots, correct?

Ryan Germany: (02:03:11)
Yes, sir.

Senator Gooch: (02:03:12)
And we just elected the most powerful position in the world, the world leader, the President of the United States. If I go to vote, which I always do, I vote in person almost every time, I have to show a photo ID, which is usually my Georgia driver's license has a photo ID. I hand it to the person that's working there. A fourth of these ballots that were just cast weren't verified by anyone except the person at the registrar's office, without very little training, little to no professional training. We just elected the most powerful person in the world. If I go buy land in my hometown, I had to have a notary public to notarize my signature. Any other business documents that you sign, most of the time, have to be notarized or witnessed. How can we certify this election-

Speaker 3: (02:04:02)
As they're witnessed, how can we certify this election this week knowing that a fourth of the ballots haven't been verified by professionals or even audited? You said earlier, I believe to Senator Dolezal, none of your people have done any checks on those signature verifications. How do we certify this election this week?

Speaker 4: (02:04:23)
So I agree with your, I think, overall point that photo ID is a good way to verify people. There was a lot of sort of fear about it when we went to photo ID for in-person voting. I think what we've found is it doesn't restrict access. It doesn't decrease turnout. It's just a good way of checking and it helps increase confidence in the process. In 2005, when we moved to photo ID, this body on a party line vote went to no excuse absentee voting that did not require ID. So that's our law. So that's how we certify it because it followed the law.

Senator Heath: (02:05:19)
All right. Thank you. I anticipated hearing from Secretary of State's office for 45 minutes. I think you've been in the hot seat now for two hours and I really do think this is beneficial. I think you've heard questions from the committee that reflect the sentiment of the people. And I hope that you would agree that this has been a good forum to kind of explain some of the misunderstandings that are out across the state and frankly across the country. So I do thank you for your time here. And again, you all know that you have access to the Secretary of State's office. If there's further questions, we want to get there. I hope that the people of Georgia, the people of this country, had an opportunity to hear what you all have said. I think it has been very beneficial. And I thank you for being here. With that I'm going to dismiss you. Thank you again for your time. And I believe that Ms. Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez is in the hallway. If she hears me maybe she can present here at the first door.

Speaker 4: (02:06:40)
I would say if you guys have any more questions, please feel free to reach out to our office and we will get [crosstalk 02:06:45].

Senator Heath: (02:06:47)
And I'll be glad to funnel those questions to the Secretary as well if that's beneficial to you. Will you just step out and be sure if you can find her? So we do have a hard cutoff at 12:30. So this room can be sanitized for the next committee meeting, but I don't think that we have actually got an elections official from Fulton County, but due to their workload. So all I would say is that in your questions, maybe you need to keep in mind they may not be prepared to answer. Okay, Ms. Corbitt-Dominguez, if you will, you can take the microphone. I think along with you, you've got Richard Anderson, the County Manager and Rob Pitts, the Chairman of the County Board of Commissioners.

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:08:04)
Yes, sir.

Senator Heath: (02:08:05)
I appreciate you all taking time to be here. And we may at the future convene another meeting with hopes of hearing from Mr. Barron, Director Barron himself. And I feel like that as much as I have tried to not throw anyone to the wolves, I'm not sure that you're as

intimately involved in the elections as the committee is maybe hoping for or expecting. So if there's questions that you don't have the answers to, just feel free to say that you don't and we'll try to get those. Maybe you can forward those questions back to the director.

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:08:51)
Yes, sir.

Senator Heath: (02:08:53)
Like I said, we may be able to have another meeting, or if that information needs to be provided to me, I can distribute it to the committee. But with that, I'll recognize you if you will, because I may have botched your name and your title. Just identify yourself.

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:09:06)
Yes, sir.

Senator Heath: (02:09:07)
And the format is you can make a presentation and then we'll take questions from members of the committee.

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:09:15)
Thank you so much, Senator.

Senator Heath: (02:09:16)
Thank you.

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:09:17)
Good morning, everyone. My name is Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez. I am the Director of External Affairs for Fulton County. I just wanted to thank all of you for the opportunity to speak with you today and thank you for your leadership in this unprecedented year that we've all had. My office handles legislative affairs and communications for Fulton County, and we certainly have worked very, very, very closely with the Elections Department. And we do have a few items in the legislative package that our Board of Commissioners adopted that are relevant to elections and that we can talk about it a little bit later.

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:09:57)
First, I'd like to let Chairman Pitts say a few words if you all don't mind. He has been very involved as well as our County Manager. As you all probably know, 10% of Georgia voters live in Fulton County. It is an all hands on deck approach. It's something that we take very seriously. So many people across our county government have been very, very involved in the elections operation. I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Chairman Pitts.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:10:33)
Good morning and thank you for the opportunity. Let me go back to June and based upon the challenges that we all faced throughout the state as a result of the elections in June, we made some changes in Fulton County, and we took the challenges that we faced at that time

very seriously. The first thing that I did as Chair of the Board of Commissioners was to set up a task force of private citizens to look at the June elections, do a deep dive into what happened, and suggest changes that could be made. And on that committee, it was a committee of some 20 people, two state legislators were on that committee. The recommendations from that committee were presented to our board of registration and elections and pretty much to the letter they were adopted. So we've made significant progress since the challenges of the June election. Specifically what happened and what changes have we made in order to prepare for what I always refer to, going back to June, as getting ready for the big dance, which was the election, the November 3rd election.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:11:45)
First of all, we increased the number of polling places in Fulton County by 91 so that we ended up with 255 polling locations for the November 3rd election. We also increased the number of early voting locations. We also bought two mobile units so that our voters would have easy access throughout the county and no matter where they lived. We also, in working with our private sector, increased the number of poll workers. We had a pool of some 6,000 individuals who came forward wanting to help us. And we ended up having 3000 poll workers ready and willing and able to assist us on November 3rd. The other thing that happened, and I had no idea to be very honest with you, it was I believe, I forget the exact date, but it was about 11 o'clock in the morning. My phone rang. It was my friend, long-time friend, Steve Koonin from the Atlanta Hawks called and said, "I got an idea."

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:13:03)
And we talked for about one minute and I said, "Steve, let me call you back." I called him back in about two minutes and five minutes later, we had a deal. That deal was for Fulton County to partner with the Atlanta Hawks to open up State Farm Arena as an early voting location for us. And I can tell you, I had no idea the impact that that would have and had not only locally, statewide, nationally and even internationally. And what I mean by that is as result of our partnership with the Atlanta Hawks and State Farm Arena, NBA teams in other cities saw what we were doing, decided to copy what we did here in Fulton County and it spread. And it's still spreading. It has gone beyond professional basketball to baseball and to even football. In fact, this afternoon, we will be announcing at one o'clock for the January 5th runoff, January 5th, January 5th runoff, Fulton County, the Atlanta Hawks, and now the Atlanta Falcons and Atlanta United will be partnering with us.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:14:18)
So we will now have not only the State Farm Arena, but Mercedes-Benz Stadium as an early voting location for the voters in Fulton County. I think that we have done an outstanding job budget- wise. We've increased our spending for this election cycle from $17 million to in excess of $35 million and it's still growing. We've spared no expense. I'm aware of the criticism that has been leveled at Fulton County. We're the largest county in the state of Georgia. But I cannot speak to what the other 158 counties have done, are doing. I cannot. But I can tell you that beyond the shadow of a doubt, there has been no instance of any

unusual activity within Fulton County. I have been personally involved in it. Has there been a situation from time to time where there's an issue with technology? Yes. Has there been a situation that from time to time where there may be human error? But as far as an orchestrated effort to manipulate the votes in Fulton County, that's not the case.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:15:32)
And what I have challenged, anyone who has made those allegations to come forward, bring that information to me and I will take it seriously. And we will get to the bottom of it. My focus right now, and the county's focus, the Board of Commissioner's focus, is to prepare for the January 5th runoff, the two U.S. Senate seats, plus a public service commission seat. And we want to make sure that our process is open, fair and transparent. So that is my commitment to you and I think that I like to ask the manager to come up. If there's anything that I missed that I should not have said, rather did not say it as an overview, but we're prepared to work with you. We'll follow the directives and instructions with Secretary of State and anybody else. We just want to get it right. And I think by the way, I would give ourselves Fulton County and A plus for the work that we did with respect to the November 3rd election.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:16:37)
And this just came in, I think this is instructive and helpful. This is from the Metro Atlanta Chamber. "On behalf of the Metro Atlanta Chamber, we congratulate and thank you for an organized, efficient and transparent election. You and your staff have displayed exceptional calm during a time when emotions have run an uncommonly high. Your regular updates kept the public informed and your trust in the process remain steadfast. Our business community places tremendous value on the integrity of the electoral process, the cornerstone of democracy.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:17:14)
For that reason, we are grateful for leaders like you who dedicated much time and energy to protecting this institution. As this election cycle approaches conclusion, we wish you continued success and the restful holidays spent with loved ones. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we or our team may be of any assistance in any way." This is on behalf of the Metro Atlanta chamber. So that simply speaks to the work that we've done with respect to the business community. But I have tons and tons of letters and emails from private citizens who say that their experience this last election was the best effort ever. And my pledge to you is to ensure that that continues for the January 5th runoff. Thank you. [inaudible 02:18:03]

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:18:12)
So Chairman, if there are any questions we can take as you said earlier, we will do our best to answer them. And we can, if there's something that we cannot answer, then we will gladly, I'll work with our elections office and get those answers for any of the committee members who are here.

Senator Heath: (02:18:31)
Okay. Thank you very much. I do appreciate you folks being here and kind of alluded to this. You'd been in the hallway or somewhere for quite some time now and our intent was to be very efficient with everyone's time and you guys have been very generous with us. So with that and keeping in mind that this is not the election staff, these folks have been very involved, but they they're not the elections officials. So let's try to keep our questions... I don't want to pose questions that we know that they can't answer. And maybe this forum will have a good feel about it and we may be able to get the Elections Director in here at a later time if we agree to that's a good time to do going forward.

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:19:27)
And sir, I don't want to interrupt, but I did want to apologize on his behalf. As you all know, there was a recount. Last night was the deadline. We were able to meet the deadline, but we did have some reconciliation work that had to take place this morning. It took longer than expected. So I want to apologize. He certainly intended to be here and I don't want that to be seen as a mark of disrespect by anyone. We felt like he needed to be there and handle that, so.

Senator Heath: (02:19:57)
Trust me, I understand. Miss [inaudible 02:20:00] has been working, like I said, for four weeks trying to coordinate and different things keep happening. So it's been hard to get people here.

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:20:10)
Yes, sir. So with that, since the buttons don't work, is there anybody that doesn't want to ask a question? The [inaudible 02:20:23] indicates he has a question on microphone 14. You're recognized.

Speaker 5: (02:20:28)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Chairman Pitts for being here and everyone for being here today and giving us your time. And I know you're very busy. I'll try to be brief. Give us a rundown on the water main break and what transpired there. People are seeing ghosts in the shadows and we need you to expound on that if you don't mind.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:20:50)
I'm not sure. That thing has taken the life of his own. There was a water, actually, there was a leak. The floor above where we were counting ballots at State Farm Arena, according to Steve Koonin, CEO of Atlanta Hawks. That occurred at 6:07 AM. I forget the exact date. By 8:07 AM, it was-

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:21:11)
It was on Election Day.

Speaker 5: (02:21:12)
That was the day of the election?

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:21:14)
Yes, sir. It was on Election Day.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:21:14)
And it was repaired within two hours. No ballots were damaged. No equipment was damaged. End of story. So how this has gotten to be what it is, I have no idea.

Speaker 5: (02:21:27)
Were there people in there working at that time when the leak was discovered?

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:21:31)
I was not there, but presumably there were people there because we started at probably seven o'clock, I believe. I'm sure that some people were there.

Speaker 5: (02:21:39)
So it happened at 6:07. It was prepared by 8:07-

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:21:43)
8:07.

Speaker 5: (02:21:45)
So there were people there working at 6:07 when it was interrupted. Were they asked to leave and was the room secured? Tell us how that was handled.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:21:54)
I was not there so I cannot answer that question.

Speaker 5: (02:21:58)
Okay. Okay.

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:21:58)
And I will say this sir, because the question of chain of custody has been raised. So I have had an opportunity to talk with the staff about that. I was not personally there, but my understanding is just in a room like this, if there was a leak over here, that does not mean that all of you would necessarily leave. And that is my understanding is that the workers who were responsible for those ballots never left the room. They were in the room the entire time. They had to stop working for a period of about two hours and that was the reason it was brought up in the first place is there was a slight delay of a couple of hours where they couldn't access the entire room, but they did not leave. And the ballots remained in the custody of the sworn workers.

Speaker 5: (02:22:47)
Thank you for bringing some clarity to it.

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:22:49)
Yes, sir.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:22:50)
And I'll just add that Mr. Koonin will testify to that effect that it was 6:07. The reason I'm so was specific about that is because he's told me on more than one occasion, from 6:07 to 8:07.

Senator Heath: (02:23:02)
I might need to know the name of the plumber. I have some leaks from time to time. That's hard to get them fixed in two hours. Senator Robertson on number two.

Senator Robertson: (02:23:15)
Yes, sir. Thank you. I appreciate y'all coming down. I must tell you, I would rather ask these questions to Mr. Barron, but I do understand the importance of today. I heard a lot of positives about the increased number of polling places by 91 since the summer moving into November, and the increase in personnel to work within those places. And I heard the number 3000 and other things. So who was responsible for the training of those individuals and was that training conducted and completed, and if so, by that person that was responsible for making sure that they had it?

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:23:59)
Yes, sir. So within the county, we have permanent staff who did handle the training of those workers in compliance. Of course, we receive training from the Secretary of State's office and our permanent staff then conduct a training of our poll workers. We also, some of those staff were technicians and received training, as I understand it, from Dominion directly, and again, under the supervision of the Secretary of State's office. Yes, all of the workers were trained. We had a combination. Anyone who was responsible for handling equipment received in-person training. We also had staff you would call line managers, so they would be outside the place to remind people to have their ID, to manage the line, just the kind of customer greeting like you might have at Walmart or somewhere else to give people basic information. Those line managers, in some cases, received virtual training, but they were not personnel touching equipment.

Senator Robertson: (02:25:08)
Now you brought up the Secretary of State's office provided the training. What they did is they provided the training to some of your permanent staff the same way they do back in Columbus. And then it's the responsibility of the permanent staff to transition that training down to the individuals. But the Secretary of State's office did not actually do any of the training. Did they?

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:25:27)
Correct. They trained, as you just said, the permanent staff. So it was a train the trainer model. So the permanent staff received training through the Secretary of State and they in turn trained those temporary poll workers.

Senator Robertson: (02:25:41)
Thank you. And how many drop boxes do y'all have in Fulton County?

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:25:44)
We have 38.

Senator Robertson: (02:25:46)
And all of those are under video surveillance?

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:25:49)
Yes, sir.

Senator Robertson: (02:25:49)
And have y'all had any requests for any of the video from any of those drop boxes that you're aware of through George's Open Records Act or any other process?

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:25:58)
That is a question I do not know the answer to. I'm not sure, Mr. Manager if you knew, but we will certainly check on that.

Senator Robertson: (02:26:04)
Thank you.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:26:06)
Let me add one other thing about personnel and trained technicians in particular. Going back to the early election, there was not a technician at every polling precinct. That should have been the responsibility of the manufacturer as is customary, I understand, and the Secretary of State. That did not happen. However, November 3rd, at the 255 locations, we had on our dime a technician at every location that we paid for.

Senator Robertson: (02:26:41)
Well, Mr. Commissioner, the county is responsible for the election, correct?

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:26:48)
Yes.

Senator Robertson: (02:26:48)
Okay. So I think the investment was wise for the county as is opposed to, and it's actually, I believe on the dime that it should have been on.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:26:58)
Yes.

Senator Robertson: (02:26:58)
And I do appreciate that.

Senator Heath: (02:27:01)
Thank you, Senator. That's what I was afraid of. Senator Gooch, you're recognized.

Senator Gooch : (02:27:08)
I didn't want to let you down. Commissioner, thank you for being here. And Richard, thank you Dick Anderson. I've known you for quite some time. We appreciate what you do at the local level. I used to be a local government official as well. Can you, and I'm going to ask this question not to be derogatory in any way, but just from a distance living in north Georgia. Every year we have elections. We watch our televisions or we watch the Secretary of State's results come in. It seems like every year there's a problem, either a delay or some kind of a technical issue or something in Fulton County. Maybe I'm wrong, but it's just what I hear and what I remember. Is there something that you need from us at the state level or from the Secretary of State to prevent those delays and those problems in the future? Or can you tell me why there seems to be a continuous problem year after year?

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:28:05)
I'll take a first stab at that and I might defer to the County Manager and our Chairman. So I do think that some of that is we are a very large county. We have more polling places than other counties. Fulton County is 70 miles from north to south. It does take time to close down the polls, get the results physically to the places where they can be uploaded. So some of that is geography and volume. Chairman Pitts, I was born and raised in Cobb County, Chairman is a proud native of Jones County. We don't hear a lot about what's happening in Jones County on WSB. We don't hear about, out of our 158 other sister counties, Fulton County is certainly in the spotlight and we recognize that. So I think some of it is reality and some of it is perception. And Chairman, I don't know if you want to...

Senator Gooch : (02:29:07)
Could I ask another question?

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:29:08)
Yes, sir.

Senator Gooch : (02:29:08)
Since the signature verifications is the responsibility of the local governments-

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:29:15)
Yes, sir.

Senator Gooch : (02:29:15)
How can you ensure us as voters and citizens of Georgia that all of the signatures are authentic and not being forged?

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:29:27)
If you don't mind, I'm going to take this off so I can [crosstalk 02:29:29] breathe a little easier. So I would say sir, there's a state prescribed process that we have workers who follow

that process. There is the first step in verification is to look at the driver's license signature for that voter if it is available in the DDS system. And that is the first step. If that signature is not available, then the workers go back to the original voter registration file and follow that process. And if they're not able to make a match from that, then that application or ballot is denied and then the voter is notified and given an opportunity to cure that process. So I think that it is our intent to follow the law, to follow the process that is provided by the Secretary of State, and to our knowledge that is what is happening.

Senator Gooch : (02:30:32)
Can you describe the training process of those employees that were trained to do that?

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:30:37)
I'm sorry. I don't think that I could speak in great detail about that, but again, as I shared with your colleague, we receive training from the Secretary of State. Our permanent staff received that training. We do have additional workers during a large election such as this where the volume is so much greater and they received a train the trainer process. So I couldn't speak in greater detail than that, but I'd be certainly glad to arrange for someone else who could.

Senator Gooch : (02:31:22)
Yes. Thank you.

Senator Heath: (02:31:27)
Okay. Are there other questions? Senator Jordan, number six, you are recognized.

Senator Jordan: (02:31:28)
Thank you. And thank y'all for being here. I really appreciate it. Really, one of the main things that I wanted to highlight is the fact that there were significant issues during the June primary. I think everybody knows about that because of the publicity that followed that. And so I just want to say thank you for working with the Fulton County delegation. Thank you for really doing a deep dive in terms of the task force and trying to really figure out what were the issues and how could you fix it before November. And I think the fact that really with respect to Fulton County how it has gone, I mean the November election, I don't think could not have gone better in terms of the way it was managed. And so I appreciate that. I really, really do.

Senator Jordan: (02:32:17)
In terms of what Senator Gooch said with respect to any kind of delay, Fulton County has approximately 835,000 registered voters, right? And so this time, it seemed like the results got out, I mean, as early as you could possibly expect them to get out in terms of the volume. Would you say that the fact that Fulton County or the various counties were allowed to at least just begin the processing of the absentee ballots kind of helped that process? Because previously you couldn't even start processing those ballots until Election Day, which of course then delays the ability to get the results out, especially if you're talking about

hundreds of thousands of people in a county. And so was that helpful this time and did that impact Fulton county's ability to actually get the election results out probably earlier than anyone expected?

Jessica Corbitt-Dominguez: (02:33:21)
Thank you, Senator Jordan. And again, thank you for all you do in partnership with Fulton County. Yes, absolutely. We received about over 130,000 absentee ballots in this election, which is 10 times more than what we had in the 2016 presidential election. And we know that Fulton County received more absentee ballots than many counties across the state have in population. So it certainly, it's a tremendous factor for us that was... Absentee voting is the most worker consumptive form of voting. You have to touch the application. You have to touch the ballot. You have to do the signature verification as we just described. You have to then scan and process. Each of those paper ballots. It is much more work intensive than other forms of voting. So the more opportunity we have in the front end to handle that, the more successful we can be, absolutely.

Senator Heath: (02:34:25)
Okay. So I think all the committee members know if you want to be recognized, you got to kind of get my attention. I will try to do that. And we do have a cutoff in about 25 minutes, but I'm going to, because he waved at me so big, I'm going to go to Senator Dolezal, and I think Senator Harbin, did you indicate if there's others, just let me know, we'll try to get to you. Recognize Senator.

Senator Dolezal: (02:34:57)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here. We really do appreciate it. I think the committee is grateful for your attendance and waiting on-

Speaker 6: (02:35:03)
... appreciate it. I think the committee is grateful for your attendance and waiting on us as we soak the secretary staff. I just had one question, and I asked this of the secretary staff and they were not clear on it. It's my understanding that the Republican members of the Fulton County board of election would not vote to certify the Fulton County election.

Speaker 6: (02:35:19)
So really two questions around that. I asked the secretary staff if they knew why, and they did not know why. It's my understanding that the reason why is that you all did not use electronic signature tools that were at your disposal maybe had been used in the past. I'm curious if y'all could shine any light on why they may have not voted for that certification. And also, I'm curious, are you aware of any other time, and your other previous election, where members of either party did not vote to certify your election?

Speaker 7: (02:35:47)
Thank you. So I can confirm that they did not vote to certify. That is correct. I do not recall the reasons that they stated. I was not monitoring that specific meeting at the time of that

vote. So I do not know what reasons they stated. The meeting was videotaped, and I will be glad to send a link for the committee to review and could look into that. And I also don't recall specifically whether or not that ever occurred. It's possible, of course. It's a five-member board and there could be any number of reasons, but I couldn't speak to whether that has occurred in the past.

Speaker 6: (02:36:26)
Thank you.

Senator Heath: (02:36:30)
Okay. Recognize the Past Chairman Harpin.

Past Chairman Harpin: (02:36:33)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you so much for being here. We appreciate it.

Speaker 7: (02:36:36)
Thank you.

Past Chairman Harpin: (02:36:37)
I'm very interested, you said the NFL, the NBA, and United were all partners. What does a partner do and how does a partner participate in that process, if you would?

Speaker 7: (02:36:50)
Chairman, would you like to speak to that?

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:36:53)
What I mean by that is, after the announcement of our partnership with the Atlanta Hawks and State Farm Arena became public, NBA teams in other cities said, "Well, if the Atlanta Hawks can do this in Fulton County with their arenas, why can't we do it here?" Because there was so much interest nationally in the election. So that's what I meant by that.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:37:18)
So they partnered with us by allowing us to use that facility. The Charlotte Hornets, as an example, they did the same thing with their arena, the Detroit Pistons switched. I forget exactly which baseball teams and which football teams did like. But in addition to that, the professional athletes, and I say this, and I mean no disrespect to them, but many of them probably couldn't spell politics until this year.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:37:46)
But they actually took the time to register and to vote and to get out in their communities and talk about the importance of voting. What we started here has been a movement, a movement between the public sector and the private sector, government and our sports teams in particular. That's what I meant by that partnership.

Senator Harper: (02:38:10)
And they also contributed staff.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:38:12)
That's right.

Senator Harper: (02:38:14)
Excuse me.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:38:15)
The Atlanta Hawks, when Steve Koonin called us, said, "We have about 300 staff people here that we're paying, so we won't cost Fulton County any money. We will pay our staff people. All you have to do is train them, get the equipment here, and train them." And they did just that.

Past Chairman Harpin: (02:38:35)
Did you have any players active, as far as participating, volunteering?

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:38:38)
We did, including Coach Pierce.

Past Chairman Harpin: (02:38:41)
Okay. The other one I was very interested in, is a mobile unit. How does a mobile unit unit function? How is it used? I mean, is it every day it's going somewhere differently? Is it going to nursing homes? Is it going to places where large groups of people are? How is that mobile process done?

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:38:58)
We had a schedule that was published. You want to?

Speaker 7: (02:39:02)
Thank you. The mobile unit is treated as a precinct. Let me just back up and say, before we had the mobile units, Fulton County has several colleges and universities within the county. So during our early voting period, we would go to Georgia Tech for a couple of days, Georgia State for a couple of days, specifically the public universities, because as you all know, early voting has to occur on either an election day site or a government-owned facility.

Speaker 7: (02:39:33)
So we had the opportunity to do that. So we had a model already where we had early voting locations that were not open the entire three-week period. So the mobile units kind of take that a step further. And so for any location that again, was either a publicly-owned facility or an election-day site, we were able to take the mobile unit out.

Speaker 7: (02:39:57)
We publicized the list. We actually have 25 different locations throughout Fulton County, North to South. And one of the things we do is we have six geographic commission districts, and we make sure that we divide early voting opportunities equitably among those commission districts.

Speaker 7: (02:40:15)
So for example, the first day of early voting, it will be at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. It's going to visit Atlanta History Center, which happens to be one of our election-day sites. And they will go for a couple of days, the same hours as whatever early voting is open that day.

Speaker 7: (02:40:33)
The other advantage is if we had, let's say, a plumbing emergency, or some facility issue at a location, we could reprogram that mobile unit to go there and provide relief on election day. The machines, the equipment, is there and we're able to have voters check in. It's Wi-Fi enabled. So we're able to offer voting and expand the number of locations. As I mentioned, Fulton County is very large and populous, and so it helps us be able to reach voters, again, all over Fulton County.

Past Chairman Harpin: (02:41:12)
Who owns those units? Just curious.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:41:14)
We do, we do. Let me give you two specific examples about the two units. The power went out at two of our precincts, the one at Chastain Park, the other at Union City. Perfect example for deploying those to mobile units.

Past Chairman Harpin: (02:41:28)
Okay. Okie-doke thank you very much.

Speaker 7: (02:41:31)
And yes, sir, they are owned by the county.

Senator Heath: (02:41:36)
Senator Harper on number four.

Senator Harper: (02:41:39)
Yes, sir. Thank you. Thank you all for being here.

Speaker 7: (02:41:42)
Thank you, sir.

Senator Harper: (02:41:43)
Really appreciate it, and thank you for your patience while we were discussing the same with the secretary of state's office. Senator Jordan referred to the early period, the secretary of

state's office, and the state elections board with the rule-

Speaker 7: (02:41:59)
Yes, sir.

Senator Harper: (02:42:00)
... where counties were given extra time before the election to start processing ballots. And if she asked this question, I apologize. Did you, or did Fulton County, did y'all utilize that emergency rule? Did you begin processing ballots early?

Speaker 7: (02:42:23)
We did. I don't know that we used the full two-week period. We had ordered some equipment throughout the process. We augmented the equipment that we were provided by the secretary of state's office. So I don't know that we used the full two-week period, but we certainly used part of it, and were able to, again, a very high volume of absentee ballots, 130,000 more than we've ever had before.

Speaker 7: (02:42:53)
So that time was very much needed to begin that process. Even just sorting the ballots and those kinds of things is very work intensive. So I don't know that we, again, took full advantage of it, given the opportunity, but we certainly were able to use that time and to the benefit of the elections process.

Past Chairman Harpin: (02:43:17)
So, and you may not know the answer, and that's fine if you don't. You don't know what percentage of those ballots you may have processed before or after?

Speaker 7: (02:43:25)
I don't. I think we have that and I will certainly look into it and try to get an answer for you.

Past Chairman Harpin: (02:43:30)
And just kind of a followup on that. I know that you process those through the scanner. Do you know? Is there a higher-speed system that we might could use to help speed that process up a little bit? Because I believe that was a lot of the issue that Fulton County dealt with that week, was trying to process those ballots.

Speaker 7: (02:43:52)
I actually spent a whole night at State Farm Arena with the workers there, and I saw firsthand, it is very time-intensive. My understanding is that vote-by-mail states, like many Western states, use an ultra-high volume or a very high-speed scanner. We used a higher-speed scanner than what you would use in the precinct, but it was still not, I guess, the highest-speed scanner that is produced. And that could certainly be an advantage in a situation like that, where you're scanning hundreds of thousands of ballots. Yes, sir.

Past Chairman Harpin: (02:44:31)
Okay. Thank you.

Speaker 7: (02:44:32)
But I'll see if I can get more information for you.

Past Chairman Harpin: (02:44:34)
All right. I think most everybody else around the committee asked some of the other questions I was going to ask. So I appreciate you being here.

Speaker 7: (02:44:41)
Thank you so much.

Senator Heath: (02:44:45)
Okay. Senator Ramon. Are you on-

Senator Ramon: (02:44:48)
I'm on seven.

Senator Heath: (02:44:50)
I see two sevens down there. Are y'all sharing a microphone? [crosstalk 02:44:54] Well, let's see.

Speaker 8: (02:44:56)
Well, the mic worked when you tried it earlier, though.

Speaker 9: (02:44:58)
They're both seven.

Senator Heath: (02:45:02)
They're both number seven. So you don't have to share a mic. They're both on.

Speaker 9: (02:45:04)
No problem. [inaudible 02:45:05] through.

Senator Ramon: (02:45:12)
Can you hear me?

Speaker 7: (02:45:13)
Yeah, I do.

Senator Heath: (02:45:13)
Yes, sir.

Senator Ramon: (02:45:13)
Okay. This is more like a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, to have an opportunity to meet us over here, and as we all know, this is an unusual time and unusual year and unusual election that we had. We heard a lot about the signature match today, but I may be the only person had a different issue. I'm talking about this is unusual times.

Senator Ramon: (02:45:40)
What happened is, the district I represent, people look a lot different than in this room, except probably me. I'm probably the only senator that recall that somebody voting in person and with the ID, didn't look exactly the same the ID was made, because of the COVID, had a beard, and the hair, everything else.

Senator Ramon: (02:46:03)
And the person was challenged. Just said, "Well, that's not you." So that's happening too. So I just want you, the committee member, to know what you're going to figure out, had a harassment, I had a call, had to interfere, and the person was able to vote eventually. But the thing is, this kind of discrimination happened too.

Senator Ramon: (02:46:23)
Even here, you have a ID and a registered voter, and a citizen, nothing wrong with it, and you voted in the primary, had no problem, and then you go to general election and they say, "Well, that don't look like you." What do you do then?

Senator Ramon: (02:46:37)
We going to have the first recognition machine or something to make sure we don't have discrimination? That's what I feel. And I had several folks in my district, they come from all different part of the world. I represent, the people come from 100 different countries, speak 100 different languages.

Senator Ramon: (02:46:57)
Sometimes some of these folks don't even speak good English. So we have a lot of other problems in the state of Georgia, not necessarily on the signature problem. I just wanted to put that out for your consideration. I want you to think about it.

Senator Heath: (02:47:11)
We will see if we can get an answer. I think the appropriate channel for that question may be to the secretary of state's office. And we'll see if we can get an answer for the committee on that. Are there other questions? Okay. Senator Robertson, number two, you are recognized.

Senator Robertson: (02:47:36)
Thank you, sir. And really quick, something that you mentioned when Senator Harper was asking his questions, is you pointed out a high-speed scanner that possibly might be available to expedite the process, while at the same time stating that your employees did not take full advantage of the time offered by the secretary of state's office to do this.

Senator Robertson: (02:47:56)
And I think that maybe looking into the process, because as a manager of large number of people, we need to make sure, especially something as important as an election, whether it's a city, county commission election, or any other election, that all of those involved are taking full advantage of the equipment, training, rules, regulations that are laid out before them.

Senator Robertson: (02:48:19)
And I hear constantly, not just from Fulton, but from other counties, "Well, you know, we're a whole lot bigger than this, and we're a lot different, and we have more ways to travel." You also have a lot more resources.

Speaker 7: (02:48:32)
Yes, sir.

Senator Robertson: (02:48:34)
Something this important, threat assessments and planning and everything is so extremely important, so I have a problem of embracing excuses that are brought up because of self-inflicted problems. And what Senator Gootz was talking about earlier is, I don't watch WSB where I'm at, I rarely read the newspaper here out of this city, but always is Fulton County brought up when there comes some kind of issue. And I think the important thing is for us to dive down and address the issue. And, in public safety and everywhere else, the resources you have are greater because of the size of your community.

Speaker 7: (02:49:20)
Yes, sir.

Senator Robertson: (02:49:21)
And so I get a little concerned with that, but I would hope before you went out and invested more of your money on high-speed scanners, that first of all, we get a good idea of what you can accomplish when you take full advantage of the regulations and rules offered to the communities by the secretary of state's office.

Speaker 7: (02:49:42)
Senator Robertson, I think that's a very fair point. I think that Fulton County is blessed with resources. We are the largest county. And one thing that we have done, I want to reassure you, is convene a team. And part of the reason I'm able to answer some of these questions today, although my job is mostly PR and legislative affairs, is because we have had a very large, multidisciplinary team across the county, a bear hug approach of wrapping ourselves around this, as first the pandemic, and secondly elections have been the two issues that we have faced this year.

Speaker 7: (02:50:26)
My boss, who is a wonderful manager and leader, our chairman, everyone from the chairman down to the staff who are wiping and making sure the facilities are safe for us have had a full-

bore approach to this. And now that the election is over, sir, although it doesn't feel like it's over quite yet, we, I believe, have already begun the after-action analysis to help us do better.

Speaker 7: (02:50:56)
This is important to us. It's important to Georgia. It's one of the services that counties are responsible for that, I think, all of us hold sacred. And I think it's something that your point is well taken. And I want to assure you that all of us are here to help make sure that happens. So thank you.

Senator Heath: (02:51:14)
Okay. I don't see any more questions in the room. I have one question, I guess, that I was worried about being asked, but as I sit here and I think about it, I want to pose the question and if you don't have the information to answer it, then just say that.

Speaker 7: (02:51:37)
Sure.

Senator Heath: (02:51:38)
There's been a lot in the media about some of the elections officials or election board, I'm not sure what, that left while there was still some counting process going on. And the only reason I ask this question is that I believe with all my heart, there's a lot of misinformation out that we're all struggling with. And we chase these little rabbits and they turn out to not be a rabbit at all. But if that is something you have knowledge of, for sure one way or the other, and could speak to that, I think this might be a forum to help clarify some of the rumors.

Speaker 7: (02:52:27)
Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity, because I was with the elections director the night of the election when this came up. Originally, we were processing absentee ballots at State Farm Arena. We had a number of staff there who had been there since early that morning when the water break that we talked about earlier occurred.

Speaker 7: (02:52:52)
One of the managers had apparently directed some of the staff to leave about 10:30 that night. I was with the elections director when he told them, "No, you need to ensure that staff stay and continue working. We still have a lot more work to do." Some of the employees did leave at 10:30, and at that time, my understanding is that at the time they left, or before they left, some of the observers also left.

Speaker 7: (02:53:23)
They may have had a conversation with some of the workers there and told them they were leaving at 10:30. I wasn't personally there for that. So I can't speak to it. There were people, however, there was a secretary of state monitor who stayed. Once there was clarification that these workers were going to continue, additional monitors stayed.

Speaker 7: (02:53:46)
So I believe it was a communication issue. I always say that every problem at some level is a communication problem, and I believe that is what occurred there. There was no intentional misleading of anyone. There was nothing untoward that occurred, but some of the workers stayed at that time. Some workers stayed, some left, some of the observers, as I understand it, had left. But there was a secretary of state monitor there the entire time. I hope that helps.

Senator Heath: (02:54:16)
Yeah. Thank you.

Speaker 7: (02:54:16)
Thank you.

Senator Heath: (02:54:18)
Okay. I'm not seeing any other questions from committee members. I do want to thank you for being here-

Speaker 7: (02:54:26)
Thank you, sir.

Senator Heath: (02:54:26)
... and filling in for Director Barron. And as I said, we may try to do this again.

Speaker 7: (02:54:33)
Sure.

Senator Heath: (02:54:35)
I know everyone is a bit overworked, and certainly, legislators are citizen legislators, and they all have other things to do, but I do believe that our centers take this responsibility very seriously, and I think that's evidenced by the fact that all of our committee members are here today.

Speaker 7: (02:54:59)
Yes, sir.

Senator Heath: (02:54:59)
I thank you all for being here. And we are we're currently about six and a half minutes short of our absolute deadline to end the meeting. So I will adjourn the meeting at this point. I do want to thank you all for being here. I thank the media for their coverage, and I apologize for the problems that we've had relative to the COVID situation. And before you actually leave, I see the whip has had a movement over here.

Speaker 10: (02:55:31)
Here we go. I just wanted to remind the audience, a lot of people out in the hall and back home that are watching, that are concerned about what's going on here in Georgia, there will

be another meeting at 1:00 p.m., and I believe it'll be aired as well on the same website. Is that correct?

Senator Heath: (02:55:51)
I believe that to be true. That's not my meeting and I can't speak authoritatively about that, but I have been made aware of that, and I plan to attend that meeting. As I understand it, and maybe we're talking about the same meeting, it's a subcommittee of the judiciary that will be meeting in this room at one o'clock. And that's not my committee. So if there's any misunderstanding, I would direct you to the secretary of the senate's website.

Speaker 10: (02:56:24)
I just didn't want people to leave their positions where they are and thinking this was the end of the discussion of the topic. It is for this committee, but there is another meeting at one o'clock. So thank you.

Senator Heath: (02:56:34)
That's exactly right. So again, thank you, Mr. Pro Tem. Let me get you turned on.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:56:40)
Thank you very much.

Senator Heath: (02:56:40)
I mean the microphone. I know you're turned on.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:56:42)
I'm wound up. I'm wound up, I can tell you. I want to thank the folks from Fulton County for being here and the secretary of state's from being here, and we heard from Muskogee County folks that could not be here. Some clarification, did we not have one more group that we were expecting?

Senator Heath: (02:57:00)
So I'll run through that again very quickly. We had invited to this meeting, election officials from Fulton County, from DeKalb County, and later Muskogee County, as well as the secretary of state's office. But in all fairness, I think it was early yesterday morning, DeKalb County communicated with us that they would not be able to make it due to their offsite workload. And I mean, I think you guys have stepped up.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:57:41)
This is what I want to recognize, exactly.

Senator Heath: (02:57:42)
The same thing is going on, probably, in every county. We have done everything we know to do to create a forum for the committee to get to the bottom of the issues that we're hearing, and to reestablish trust in the elections process. And I want you to know that as your chairman, if you have recommendations for a future meeting, we can certainly do that.

Senator Heath: (02:58:10)
I would ask you to communicate those. Probably, the best way is to communicate those through Abby, who does a phenomenal job for me, but as you do that, let us know what your availability is. I realize this is the Christmas season. I know, as legislators, the calendar really ramps up as you start into the next session. But we can certainly meet again, but I will not abuse your time. And we'll do whatever we can do to serve you. With that, the meeting is adjourned.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:58:46)
Mr. [inaudible 02:58:47], I just want to make one closing statement. That's to thank you and the members for allowing us to be here. And if you have any suggestions whatsoever that you think will be helpful to Fulton County to make sure that January 5th is a smooth, is an open, and a fair and transparent election, I would like to hear from you. I would welcome that, and I will not consider that to be any criticism of anything that we're doing. But we want help. If you can help us in any way, ideas, suggestions, we're open. If you need us back here again, we will be here. That's my commitment to you.

Senator Heath: (02:59:23)
We appreciate it.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:59:23)
Thank you, sir.

Senator Heath: (02:59:24)
Y'all have a Merry Christmas if we don't see you.

Chairman Robb Pitts: (02:59:25)
Thank you.

Speaker 7: (02:59:25)
Merry Christmas.

Senator Heath: (02:59:36)
[crosstalk 00:24: 26].

Chairman Robb Pitts: (03:00:12)
Thank you.

INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

Case Number: SEB2020- 257

Case Name: **Cobb County- Absentee Ballot Signature Verifications**

Date: **12/29/2020**

Georgia Secretary of State/Georgia Bureau of Investigation
ABM Signature Audit Report

Task

On Monday, December 14, 2020, Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger announced that a signature audit of absentee-by-mail (ABM) ballot oath envelopes would be conducted in Cobb County. The Secretary of State's Office partnered with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) to review a statistically significant sample of signatures on oath envelopes from the November 3, 2020, General Election. Signatures and other identifying information on the ABM ballot oath envelopes would be compared to records in both the Cobb County Elections and Voter Registration Department database and the State of Georgia's voter registration system. The audit would be performed by law enforcement investigators with the Secretary of State's Office and GBI special agents.

Summary of Findings

The audit team, consisting of law enforcement officers with the Secretary of State's office and GBI, reviewed 15,118 ABM ballot oath envelopes from randomly selected boxes that stored the 150,431 ABM ballots received in Cobb County for the November 3, 2020 General Election. The sample size of oath envelopes reviewed was chosen in order to reach a 99% confidence level in the results. Utilizing the decision guidelines set forth below, the audit team confirmed the accuracy of the initial determination of the Cobb County Elections Department in all but two

cases. In the two cases where the audit team determined that the voter should have received a cure notification, the audit team was able to confirm by interviews with the voters that the actual voters in question cast the ballots. Based on the results of the audit, the Cobb County Elections Department had a 99.99% accuracy rate in performing correct signature verification procedures. The audit team was also able to confirm that the two ballots that should have initially been identified by Cobb County Elections Department staff as requiring a cure notification were actually cast by the voters to whom they were issued. No fraudulent absentee ballots were identified during the audit.

Method

Sample size: It was determined the audit sample size would be approximately 10% of the total ABM ballots as reported by the Cobb County Elections Department. The breakdown of ABM ballots was as follows:

- 149,988 **Accepted** ABM ballots
- 78 ABM ballots **rejected** due to missing signature, not cured (see SEB Rule 183-1-14-.13)
- 32 ABM ballots **rejected** due to invalid signature, not cured (see SEB Rule 183-1-14-.13)
- 333 ABM ballots **rejected** due to receipt after deadlines.
- 150,431 Total ABM ballots received

Sample selection: All ABM ballot oath envelopes were previously secured in boxes by the Cobb County Elections Department. The following was noted:

- All envelopes which contained Cobb County Elections Department rejected ABM ballots were audited. Ballots that were rejected due to receipt after the deadline were confirmed to have been received after the deadline.
- It was determined that the remaining sample size would be pulled from 30 randomly selected boxes of the accepted ABM ballots and one box identified as accepted Electronic Ballot Delivery ABM ballots.
- The boxes had previously been labeled with a unique box number.
- Those unique box numbers were entered into a random number generator application to determine which boxes would be selected for the sample.
- Envelopes were randomly selected and audited within each box.

Standard of comparison: OCGA 21-2-386(a)(1)(B): ... *The registrar or clerk shall then compare the identifying information on the oath with the information on file in his or her office, shall compare the signature or mark on the oath with the signature or mark on the absentee elector's voter registration card or the most recent update to such absentee elector's voter registration card and application for absentee ballot or a facsimile of said signature or mark taken from said card or application, and shall,* ***if the information and signature appear to be valid and other identifying information appears to be correct****, so certify by signing or initialing his or her name below the voter's oath.*

Signature comparison: Law enforcement officers (LEOs) would analyze and compare the known signatures, markings, and identifying information of the elector as stored in databases with the signature, markings, and identifying information on the elector's ABM ballot oath envelope. LEOs would look for distinctive characteristics and unique qualities such as letters and word spacing, letter and word slant, size and proportionality of letters and numbers, unusual and unique formations of letters and numbers, flourishes, baseline alignment, and other individual attributes of the signature, mark, or other identifying information. LEOs would evaluate the similarities and differences between the two and make a judgment of the validity of the signature on each envelope based on the totality of the documents.

Document comparison: LEOs were given access to the Cobb County Elections Department's database which included some or all of the following documents for comparison:

- Voter registration forms (including Department of Drivers Services, mail-in voter registration cards, Federal Postcard Applications)
- Absentee Ballot Applications
- Voter Certificates
- Confirmation Notices for voters
- Signature Cure Affidavits
- Passports
- Certificates of Naturalization

Decision Guidelines: The audit team, consisting of Secretary of State investigators and GBI special agents, was divided into 18 two-member teams identified as "inspection teams" and two three-member teams identified as "investigation teams" for the task of evaluating signatures, marks, and identifying information on envelopes.

- **Inspection team decision guidelines:**
  - If both team members agreed that signature/identifying information appeared valid, the envelope was accepted.
  - If both team members agreed that signature/identifying information appeared invalid, the envelope was submitted to an investigation team.
  - If team members were split on judging the validity of the signature/identifying information, a designated "referee" made the deciding vote on acceptance of the envelope or its submission to an investigation team.
  - Envelopes were submitted to investigations teams automatically when there was no signature or if there were no documents for the elector in the Cobb County Elections Department database to be used for comparison.

- **Investigation team decision guidelines:**
  - The investigation teams received copies of envelopes from the inspection teams for additional examination.

- The investigation team accessed the State of Georgia voter registration system database for additional elector documents and requested additional documents from the Cobb County Elections Department.
- After further evaluation, if two of the three investigation team members agreed that signature/identifying information appeared valid, the envelope was accepted.
- If two of the three investigation team members agreed that signature/identifying information appeared invalid, the elector would be located and interviewed.

Findings

- 15,118 ABM ballot oath envelopes were evaluated by the inspection teams. On six occasions, referees were called upon by the inspection teams as the third vote to decide to accept the signature/identifying information as valid or refer the envelope to the investigation teams.
- The inspection teams submitted 396 envelopes to the investigation teams for comparison with additional documents or follow-up with the elector.
- After evaluation of the inspection teams' envelopes, 386 were accepted as valid. The remaining ten envelopes were referred for contact with the elector for the following reasons:
  - 8 – Elector's signatures/identifying information did not appear to be consistent with documents on record.
  - 1 – Contained no signature or mark
  - 1 – Contained a signature, but was not the signature of the elector
- All ten electors were located, positively identified, and interviewed. Those interviews found the following:
  - All eight electors whose signatures were deemed valid by Cobb County Elections Department staff but not consistent by the LEOs conducting the audit, acknowledged completing and signing the ABM ballot oath envelope in question, verifying that the initial Cobb County Elections Department initial determination of validity was correct.
  - The elector whose envelope contained no signature or mark, acknowledged submitting the ABM ballot oath envelope in question, but reported signing the front of the envelope only. The final envelope in question was found to be mistakenly signed by the elector's spouse. The elector confirmed that he filled out the absentee ballot himself.
- **Of the 15,118 envelopes sampled, the following was found:**
  - **Two of the ten previously identified ABM ballot oath envelopes should have been identified by the Cobb County Elections Department as requiring an opportunity for the voter to cure the ballots prior to acceptance.**
  - **No fraudulent absentee ballots were identified during the audit.**

O.C.G.A. 21-2-386. Safekeeping, certification, and validation of absentee ballots; rejection of ballot; delivery of ballots to manager; duties of managers; precinct returns; notification of challenged elector

(a) (1) (A) The board of registrars or absentee ballot clerk shall keep safely, unopened, and stored in a manner that will prevent tampering and unauthorized access all official absentee ballots received from absentee electors prior to the closing of the polls on the day of the primary or election except as otherwise provided in this subsection.

(B) Upon receipt of each ballot, a registrar or clerk shall write the day and hour of the receipt of the ballot on its envelope. The registrar or clerk shall then compare the identifying information on the oath with the information on file in his or her office, shall compare the signature or mark on the oath with the signature or mark on the absentee elector's voter registration card or the most recent update to such absentee elector's voter registration card and application for absentee ballot or a facsimile of said signature or mark taken from said card or application, and shall, if the information and signature appear to be valid and other identifying information appears to be correct, so certify by signing or initialing his or her name below the voter's oath. Each elector's name so certified shall be listed by the registrar or clerk on the numbered list of absentee voters prepared for his or her precinct.

(C) If the elector has failed to sign the oath, or if the signature does not appear to be valid, or if the elector has failed to furnish required information or information so furnished does not conform with that on file in the registrar's or clerk's office, or if the elector is otherwise found disqualified to vote, the registrar or clerk shall write across the face of the envelope "Rejected," giving the reason therefor. The board of registrars or absentee ballot clerk shall promptly notify the elector of such rejection, a copy of which notification shall be retained in the files of the board of registrars or absentee ballot clerk for at least two years. Such elector shall have until the end of the period for verifying provisional ballots contained in subsection (c) of Code Section 21-2-419 to cure the problem resulting in the rejection of the ballot. The elector may cure a failure to sign the oath, an invalid signature, or missing information by submitting an affidavit to the board of registrars or absentee ballot clerk along with a copy of one of the forms of identification enumerated in subsection (c) of Code Section 21-2-417 before the close of such period. The affidavit shall affirm that the ballot was submitted by the elector, is the elector's ballot, and that the elector is registered and qualified to vote in the primary, election, or runoff in question. If the board of registrars or absentee ballot clerk finds the affidavit and identification to be sufficient, the absentee ballot shall be counted.

SEB Rule 183-1-14-.13. Prompt Notification of Absentee Ballot Rejection

When a timely submitted absentee ballot is rejected, the board of registrars or absentee ballot clerk shall send the elector notice of such rejection and opportunity to cure by mailing written notice and attempt to notify the elector by telephone and email, if a telephone number or email is on the elector's voter registration record or absentee ballot application, no later than the close of business on the third business day after receiving the absentee ballot. However, for any timely submitted absentee ballot that is rejected within eleven days of Election Day, the board of registrars or absentee ballot clerk shall send the elector notice of such rejection and

opportunity to cure by mailing written notice and attempt to notify the elector by telephone and email, if a telephone number or email is on the elector's voter registration record or absentee ballot application, no later than close of business on the next business day.

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https://www.wsj.com/articles/proud-boys-seizing-trumps-call-to-washington-helped-lead-capitol-attack-11610911596

U.S.

Proud Boys, Seizing Trump's Call to Washington, Helped Lead Capitol Attack

Far-right group invoked the president's rhetoric to build momentum toward violent showdown, a Wall Street Journal review shows



The Proud Boys are one of a handful of extremist groups that participated in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol.

PHOTO: ZUMA PRESS

By Georgia Wells, Rebecca Ballhaus and Keach Hagey
Jan. 17, 2021 2:26 pm ET

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7 minutes

On Jan. 3, three days before the attack on the Capitol, Enrique Tarrio, the leader of the far-right organization known as the Proud Boys, shared a cryptic post on the messaging app Telegram: "What if we invade it?"

The message was sent to his more than 7,000 followers on the app, with the first reply reading "January 6th is D day in America."

The Wall Street Journal reviewed thousands of posts from the Proud Boys and their members across Parler, Telegram and Gab, the social-media platforms where they rallied supporters online after mostly being banned from Facebook and Twitter. The messages show the group repeatedly invoking President Trump's rhetoric in the weeks leading to the Jan. 6 protest as they built momentum toward what became a violent showdown.

Investigators have said they are scrutinizing online messages like these as they attempt to determine the planning and intent of those involved in the attack on the Capitol.



In a social media post, the Proud Boys shared this flier of Mr. Trump.
PHOTO: SITE INTELLIGENCE GROUP

The Journal's review, which included now-deleted posts that have been archived by researchers, suggests the Proud Boys viewed Mr. Trump's messages as a call to action.

On Parler, where the group's official account had more than 340,000 followers before the platform went offline last week, Mr. Tarrio said on Dec. 29 that the Proud Boys would be able to put a thousand "boots on the ground" and "turn out in record numbers on Jan. 6."

In December, after Mr. Trump tweeted about the Jan. 6 rally and said to "be there, will be wild," the Long Island chapter of the Proud Boys posted that Trump supporters have been "waiting for the green light from the President."

"Everyone who said 'Mr. President, just say when?' He just did," the post said.

The Proud Boys escalated their social-media activity and appeared emboldened after the Sept. 29 presidential debate, the Journal's review shows. In that debate, moderator Chris Wallace asked Mr. Trump if he would condemn white supremacists and militia groups. As part of his reply, the president said, "Proud Boys, stand back and stand by."

The response within the group, whose members describe themselves as "Western chauvinists" and advocate misogynistic, racist and anti-Semitic views, was euphoric.

On Parler, members shared designs for a T-shirt inspired by Mr. Trump's comments. It read: "Proud Boys standing by."

AFTERMATH OF THE CAPITOL RIOT

- Latest: More Jan. 6 Rioters Arrested
- Senate GOP to Argue Out-of-Office Trump Can't be Convicted in Impeachment
- Prosecutors Report Evidence of Advance Coordination in Capitol Riots

According to SITE Intelligence Group, a Bethesda, Md., organization that studies foreign and domestic extremists, one member of a Telegram group chat for the Proud Boys posted that he interpreted Mr. Trump's debate comment as a call to be prepared for when "he can call on us to essentially 'let loose the dogs of war.'"

The Proud Boys are one of a handful of extremist groups that participated in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol. Multiple Proud Boys members have been arrested or identified in footage from the attack, and the group's activities are part of the federal investigation, officials said Friday.

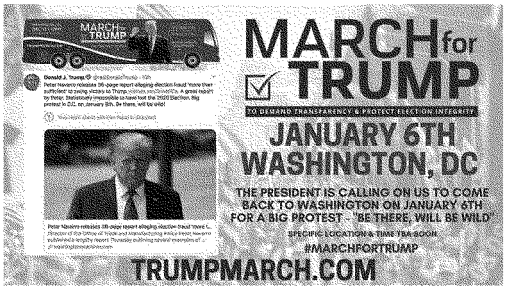
In charging documents for self-identified Proud Boys, the group is described as "known to the FBI as being present and disrupting the functions of the U.S. Congress." Estimates from researchers vary about the size of the group, ranging from a few hundred to up to 10,000 men.

The White House referred to the president's previous comments about the group. In the days after his "stand back and stand by" comment in September, after being criticized for not condemning the group outright, the president said he didn't know who the Proud Boys were and told Fox News: "I condemn all white supremacists. I condemn the Proud Boys."

Mr. Tarrio said in a text message to the Journal that "we have and always will support the president," calling Mr. Trump "an inspiration to many, not just our organization." He said his posts about a possible invasion was a reference to his supporters possibly gaining control of the Republican Party through peaceful means.

Mr. Tarrio, who was banned from Washington, D.C., after being arrested in connection with the burning of a Black Lives Matter banner, wasn't present at the rally. He has said he ordered his members not to storm the Capitol but that he won't denounce any who did.

The Journal's review shows that the Proud Boys didn't take Mr. Trump's denunciation of the group at face value.



A Proud Boys chapter embedded a Trump tweet in fliers to encourage their members to attend the Jan. 6 event, according to screenshots from the SITE Intelligence Group.

PHOTO: SITE INTELLIGENCE GROUP

When Mr. Trump lost the election, members of the Proud Boys responded with disbelief online. They blamed it on antifascist groups, or antifa, and called on members to attend a Nov. 14 march in Washington, D.C., to support Mr. Trump. That evening, Proud Boys walked the streets of Washington wearing their signature black-and-gold shirts and chanting "F--- antifa."

Hours later, Mr. Trump posted to Twitter: "Antifa SCUM ran for the hills today when they tried attacking the people at the Trump Rally, because those people aggressively fought back."

On Telegram, the official Proud Boys account shared Mr. Trump's message and said "I just got a freedom boner."

Ahead of a Dec. 12 rally, Mr. Tarrio posted photos from the steps of the White House, writing: "Last-minute invitation to an undisclosed location." Trump spokesman Judd Deere said at the time Mr. Tarrio was there for a public tour and that he hadn't met with the president or been invited by the White House.

On Jan. 2, longtime Trump adviser Roger Stone participated in a Proud Boys effort to pressure Sen. Marco Rubio to not certify the results of the election. Mr. Tarrio led about two dozen Trump supporters in front of Mr. Rubio's Miami home, while Mr. Stone called in to the rally to speak to the crowd.

In a video on the Proud Boys website, Mr. Tarrio asks Mr. Stone if there is something he would like to tell the group. "Absolutely. Keep the faith," Mr. Stone says in the video.

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In an interview, Mr. Stone—who was convicted last year of witness tampering, obstruction and lying to Congress and then pardoned by Mr. Trump—said he knows "a number of individual Proud Boys" but isn't a member. He said that while the Proud Boys whom he knows are supporters of Mr. Trump, "no one in their right mind can think what happened in the Capitol is helpful to the president's political movement. It's counterproductive."

In the lead-up to the Jan. 6 event, Proud Boys on Telegram cautioned each other about measures law enforcement might take and encouraged one another to delete their social-media accounts, according to the Journal review.

After a speech from Mr. Trump in which he urged the crowd to march to the Capitol and said "if you don't fight like hell you're not going to have a country anymore," a group of men in blaze-orange hats and military-style vests surged into the metal barricade that stood between them and the government building. Moments earlier, the men in orange hats had chanted the Proud Boys slogan. Several leaders of the Proud Boys have been identified by researchers as marching with the group.

Once the metal barricade toppled, the crowd charged up the stairs and into the Capitol.

—Aruna Viswanatha contributed to this article.

Write to Georgia Wells at Georgia.Wells@wsj.com, Rebecca Ballhaus at Rebecca.Ballhaus@wsj.com and Keach Hagey at keach.hagey@wsj.com

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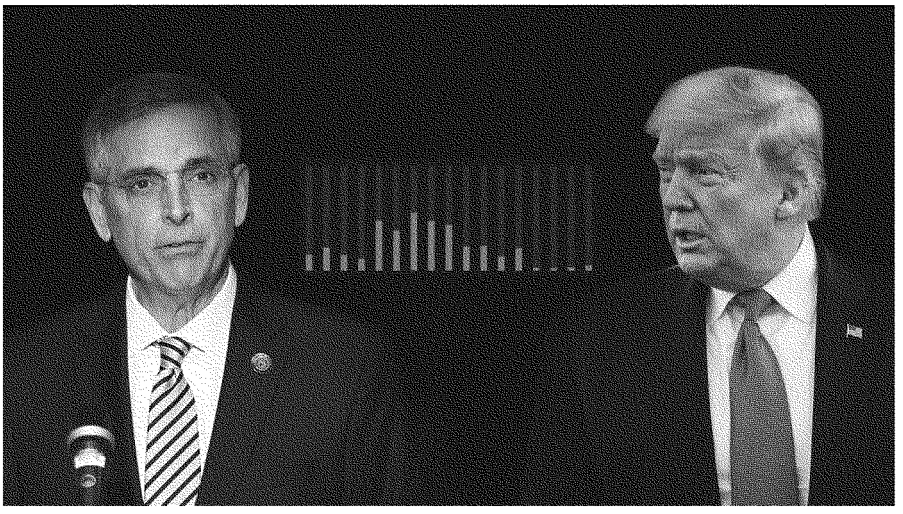
Fact-checking Trump's call to the Georgia secretary of state

washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/01/04/fact-checking-trumps-call-georgia-secretary-state/

By Glenn Kessler January 4, 2021



Our colleague Amy Gardner had a terrific scoop Sunday, obtaining the audio of a one-hour call between President Trump and Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, in which Trump urged Raffensperger to "find" enough votes to overturn his defeat in the state.

Her article provided a quick summary of the various false claims that the president made in the call, but here's a quick guide on the facts so readers can see how the president framed these statements himself. We will go through the claims, more or less in the order in which they were presented. What is clear is that the president is relying on highly dubious sources of information as he continues to contest the election results.

"I think it's pretty clear that we won. We won very substantially in Georgia."

No, Trump lost. President-elect Joe Biden has been certified as the winner of the state, after two recounts.

"You even see it by rally size, frankly. We'd be getting 25-30,000 people a rally, and the competition would get less than 100 people. And it never made sense."

Trump has long been obsessed over the size of the crowds at his rallies. In the final days of the election campaign, according to our database of Trump's false and misleading claims, Trump repeatedly hyped the number of people at his rallies — he rarely attracted more than 25,000 people — and often remarked that his crowds were bigger than any previous American or even world figure. (Not so.) He also knocked Biden for having small crowds, even though the Biden campaign was purposely trying to model good behavior during the pandemic.

In these comments, Trump echoes something he said often in his final rallies — that he could not possibly lose because of the crowds he attracted. He constantly inflated the size of the "tractor rallies" and "boat rallies" on his behalf. But it's absurd to believe crowd sizes translate into votes. Many losing presidential campaigns — such as George McGovern's in 1972 — attracted huge crowds in the last days of the campaign.

"The crowds at campaign events were large and enthusiastic," recalled McGovern in a 2012 article. "I didn't pay undue attention to the polls, and I wasn't overly concerned that there would be no face-to-face debates with Nixon. But when election night came and the early returns revealed one of the most lopsided victories in U.S. history, I was genuinely stunned." (McGovern lost 49 states to Richard M. Nixon.)

"Anywhere from 250 to 300,000 ballots were dropped mysteriously into the rolls."

Only someone unaware of how ballots are counted would think something is mysterious. Trump is referring to the counting of mail-in ballots — almost two-thirds of the 1.3 million absentee ballots in Georgia were cast for Biden — that were generally counted after in-person ballots had been tabulated. In Georgia, absentee ballots can be processed (such as removed from envelopes and signature checked) upon receipt, but they cannot be counted until Election Day.

"Much of that had to do with Fulton County, which hasn't been checked. We think that if you check the signatures — a real check of the signatures going back in Fulton County — you'll find at least a couple of hundred thousand of forged signatures of people who have been forged."

Trump is making up numbers here. There were only about 147,000 absentee ballots cast in Fulton County, making it impossible for "a couple of hundred thousand" forged signatures.

"People that went to vote and they were told they can't vote because they've already been voted for. And it's a very sad thing. They walked out complaining. But the number's large. ... You also have a substantial numbers of people, thousands and thousands, who went to the voting place on

November 3, were told they couldn't vote, were told they couldn't vote because a ballot had been put on their name. And you know that's very, very, very, very sad."

This has been a persistent claim by the Trump campaign in various states — that Trump supporters went to vote, only to find their ballot had already been cast (presumably by Democratic operatives) and thus they were given a provisional ballot. No evidence has ever emerged to prove this. "There have no reports of anyone being turned away on Election Day," Raffensperger told CBS Evening News, noting the situation described by Trump surely would have been reported.

"There were no Republican poll watchers. Actually, there were no Democrat poll watchers, I guess they were them. But there were no Democrats, either, and there was no law enforcement. Late in the morning, early in the morning, they went to the table with the black robe and the black shield, and they pulled out the votes. Those votes were put there a number of hours before — the table was put there — I think it was, Brad, you would know, it was probably eight hours or seven hours before, and then it was stuffed with votes. They weren't in an official voter box; they were in what looked to be suitcases or trunks, suitcases, but they weren't in voter boxes."

During a campaign rally for the Senate runoff races in December, Trump made a similar claim, which we debunked at the time.

The surveillance video at State Farm Arena, which comprises four security camera feeds — shows no irregularities, illegal behavior or evidence of malfeasance on behalf of poll workers. The supposed "suitcases" have been repeatedly identified by election officials as the standard boxes used in Fulton County to transport and store ballots. The video also fails to show any act of hiding or obscuring any ballots or election materials. Additionally, the video shown doesn't prove the Trump campaign's assertion that GOP monitors were told to leave the counting room in order for poll workers to engage in illegal ballot counting.

Here's our video fact check of this claim:

"It was late in the evening, late in the, early in the morning, and there was nobody else in the room. Where were the poll watchers, and why did they say a water main broke, which they did and which was reported in the newspapers? They said they left. They ran out because of a water main break, and there was no water main. There was nothing. There was no break."

Later in the call, Trump referenced a supposed water main break used to clear the room of poll watchers, a key focus of right-wing conspiracy theory websites. Officials have explained that a urinal had created a "little slow leak" in the arena.

"You had out-of-state voters. They voted in Georgia, but they were from out of state, of 4,925."

During the call, secretary of state counsel Ryan Germany told Trump that his numbers were wrong. "They're not accurate," he said. "Every one we've been through are people that lived in Georgia, moved to a different state, but then moved back to Georgia legitimately."

"You had drop boxes, which is very bad. You had drop boxes that were picked up. We have photographs, and we have affidavits from many people."

Germany previously told the state House Government Affairs Committee that video reviews found this to be false.

"The other thing, dead people. So dead people voted, and I think the number is close to 5,000 people. And they went to obituaries. They went to all sorts of methods to come up with an accurate number, and a minimum is close to about 5,000 voters."

Another ludicrous number. During the call and at the state hearing, Germany said they have found a total of two dead people who voted. "Usually, that's somebody who died recently, and a family member votes with [the name]," Germany said. "That handful of instances are consistent with what we see in every election. Again, it's not okay."

"The bottom line is, when you add it all up and then you start adding, you know, 300,000 fake ballots."

It is easy to add up nonsense numbers and come up with an even bigger number.

"They are burning their ballots, that they are shredding, shredding ballots and removing equipment. They're changing the equipment on the Dominion machines and, you know, that's not legal."

As Raffensperger explained during the call, none of this is true. At a news conference Monday, Georgia's voting system manager Gabriel Sterling expressed bewilderment at Trump's claim about Dominion machines being altered. "This is not a thing," he said.

During the call, Raffensperger pointedly noted that Trump's claims about Dominion machines could not possibly be true "because we did a hand re-tally, a 100 percent re-tally of all the ballots, and compared them to what the machines said and came up with virtually the same result. Then we did the recount, and we got virtually the same result."

"Remember, her reputation is — she's known all over the Internet, Brad. She's known all over. I'm telling you, 'Where's [name]' was one of the hot items ... [name] They knew her. 'Where's [name]?' So Brad, there can be no justification for that."

At one point, Trump referenced by name an election worker at the State Farm Arena who has been subject of feverish speculation by QAnon followers, who falsely believed she had been arrested. (The Washington Post is not printing her name.) Trump here demonstrates how deep in the conspiracy theory swamps he has swum.

"Brad, why did they put the votes in three times? You know, they put 'em in three times."

"Mr. President, they did not put that," Raffensperger replied. "We did an audit of that, and we proved conclusively that they were not scanned three times."

"They supposedly shredded I think they said 300 pounds of, 3,000 pounds of ballots. And that just came to us as a report today."

This is more crazed Twitter speculation, with no basis in fact. Cobb County officials explained on Nov. 24 that a shredding company every election is hired to "dispose of non-relevant materials that cannot be easily disposed of," such as mailing labels and sticky notes. "None of these items are relevant to the election or the re-tally," Elections Director Janine Eveler said. "Everything of consequence, including the ballots, absentee ballot applications with signatures, and anything else used in the count or re-tally remains on file.

"In Detroit, we had, I think it was, 139 percent of the people voted. That's not too good."

This has been debunked repeatedly. As we previously reported, Trump campaign allies mixed up precincts in Minnesota and Michigan. Someone had apparently mixed up two states that started with "Mi." The precincts were not in Wayne County but in some of the reddest parts of Minnesota — Trump country. It turns out that about 51 percent of the registered voters in the city cast a ballot.

"In Pennsylvania, they had well over 200,000 more votes than they had people voting."

Another debunked statement, based on a misunderstanding of an incomplete voter registration database, which was missing numbers for some of the most populous counties in the state. "To put it simply, this so-called analysis was based on incomplete data," said Pennsylvania's Department of State, which labeled the claim as "obvious misinformation."

"She got you to sign a totally unconstitutional agreement, which is a disastrous agreement. You can't check signatures. I can't imagine you're allowed to do harvesting, I guess, in that agreement."

The "she" here is voting-rights advocate Stacey Abrams. Trump is referring to a March settlement under which voters were to be contacted if problems arose with their absentee ballot. But Trump wrongly believes it did not allow signature verification and that it allows

"harvesting," the collecting of ballots in bulk permitted in some states. But not in Georgia, as Raffensperger quickly pointed out.

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Trump Gives White Supremacists an Unequivocal Boost

nytimes.com/2017/08/15/us/politics/trump-charlottesville-white-nationalists.html

August 16, 2017



WASHINGTON — President Trump buoyed the white nationalist movement on Tuesday as no president has done in generations — equating activists protesting racism with the neo-Nazis and white supremacists who rampaged in Charlottesville, Va., over the weekend.

Never has he gone as far in defending their actions as he did during a wild, street-corner shouting match of a news conference in the gilded lobby of Trump Tower, angrily asserting that so-called alt-left activists were just as responsible for the bloody confrontation as marchers brandishing swastikas, Confederate battle flags, anti-Semitic banners and "Trump/Pence" signs.

"Thank you President Trump for your honesty & courage to tell the truth," David Duke, a former Ku Klux Klan leader, wrote in a Twitter post shortly after Mr. Trump spoke.

Richard B. Spencer, a white nationalist leader who participated in the weekend's demonstrations and vowed to flood Charlottesville with similar protests in the coming weeks, was equally encouraged. "Trump's statement was fair and down to earth," Mr. Spencer tweeted.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe of Virginia, a Democrat, wasted little time in accusing the president of adding to the divisions that put an unwanted spotlight on the normally peaceful college town.

"Neo-Nazis, Klansmen and white supremacists came to Charlottesville heavily armed, spewing hatred and looking for a fight," Mr. McAuliffe said. "One of them murdered a young woman in an act of domestic terrorism, and two of our finest officers were killed in a tragic accident while serving to protect this community. This was not 'both sides.'"

No word in the Trump lexicon is as tread-worn as "unprecedented." But members of the president's staff, stunned and disheartened, said they never expected to hear such a voluble articulation of opinions that the president had long expressed in private. The National Economic Council chairman, Gary D. Cohn, and the Treasury secretary, Steven Mnuchin, who are Jewish, stood by uncomfortably as the president exacerbated a controversy that has once again engulfed a White House in disarray.

"I've condemned neo-Nazis," Mr. Trump told reporters, who interrupted him repeatedly when he seemed to equate the actions of protesters on each side.

He spoke of "very fine people on both sides." And of the demonstrators who rallied on Friday night, some chanting racist and anti-Semitic slogans, he said, "You had a lot of people in that group that were there to innocently protest and very legally protest."

Since the 1960s, Republican politicians have made muscular appeals to white voters, especially those in the South, on broad cultural grounds. But as a rule, they have taken a hard line on the party's racist, nativist and anti-Semitic fringe. Presidents Ronald Reagan, George Bush and George W. Bush roundly condemned white supremacists.

In 1991, President George Bush took on Mr. Duke, who was then seeking the governor's seat in Louisiana, saying, "When someone has so recently endorsed Nazism, it is inconceivable that someone can reasonably aspire to a leadership role in a free society."

But Mr. Trump, who has repeatedly said he is not prejudiced, has been equivocal in his public or private statements against white nationalists and other racist organizations.

On Saturday, in his first comments on Charlottesville, Mr. Trump blamed the violence on protesters from "many sides."

After a storm of criticism over his remarks, Mr. Trump's aides persuaded him to moderate his message by assigning explicit blame for the violence to far-right agitators, which led to a stronger denunciation of hate groups — emailed to reporters and attributed to an unnamed "spokesperson."

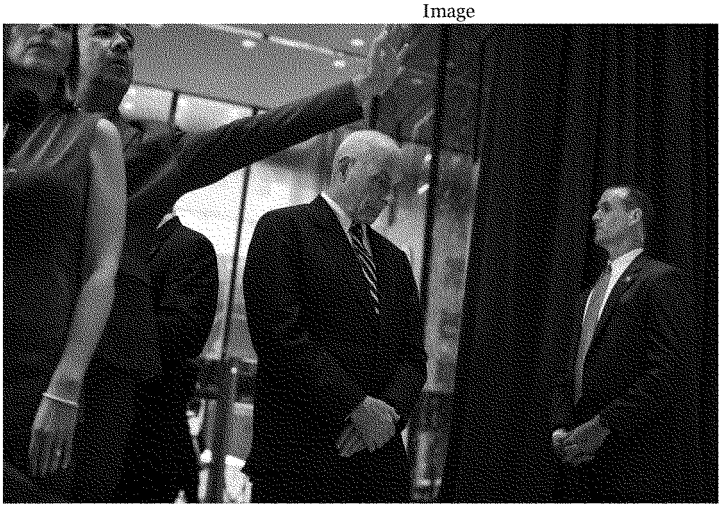
When that failed to quell the controversy, aides, including Mr. Trump's new chief of staff, John F. Kelly, pressed him to make another public statement. Mr. Trump's daughter Ivanka and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, urged him to take a more moderate stance, according to two people familiar with the situation. But as with so many other critical moments in Mr. Trump's presidency, the two were on vacation, this time in Vermont.

Grudgingly, Mr. Trump agreed.

"Racism is evil," the president said on Monday, delivering a statement from the White House that was written with aides during airplane and helicopter flights.

"Those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the K.K.K., white supremacists and other hate groups," he added — in response to bipartisan condemnation of his more equivocal statements during the first 48 hours of the crisis.

Image



John F. Kelly, the White House chief of staff, on Tuesday during Mr. Trump's news conference at Trump Tower in Manhattan.Credit...Al Drago for The New York Times

But his unifying tone, which his staff characterized as more traditionally presidential, quickly gave way to a more familiar Trump approach. No sooner had he delivered the Monday statement than he began railing privately to his staff about the news media. He fumed to aides about how unfairly he was being treated, and expressed sympathy with nonviolent protesters who he said were defending their "heritage," according to a West Wing official.

He felt he had already given too much ground to his opponents, the official said.

Mr. Trump prides himself on an unapologetic style he learned from his father, Fred Trump, a New York City housing developer, and Roy Cohn, a combative lawyer who served as an aide to Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s. During the 2016 presidential campaign, Mr. Trump attracted a significant following of white supremacists, expressed sympathy with white Southerners fighting to preserve monuments for Confederate icons and was slow to distance himself from racists like Mr. Duke.

The president's fury grew Monday as members of a White House business council began to resign to protest his reaction to Charlottesville. As usual, Mr. Trump found his voice by tweeting angrily about the news media.

By Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Trump's staff sensed the culmination of a familiar cycle: The president was about to revert to his initial, more defiant stance. As Mr. Trump approached the microphone in the lobby of Trump Tower on Tuesday, aides winced at the prospect of an unmediated president. With good reason.

"Alt-left" groups were also "very, very violent," Mr. Trump said early in his exchange with reporters.

He went on to assign "blame on both sides" — echoing his comments on Saturday, and reigniting a fight that has sunk staff morale after a brief bump in enthusiasm that followed the hiring of Mr. Kelly, who was to impose discipline on a chaotic West Wing.

Eric Cantor, a former Republican congressman from Virginia who was a member of Republican leadership, was horrified by what took place in Charlottesville, and said the president needed to have spoken out earlier.

"It really did demand a statement at the very beginning," said Mr. Cantor, who is Jewish. He added that efforts by the president to equate the actions of the counterprotesters, however violent they may have been, with the neo-Nazis and the driver of the car that murdered a protester were "unacceptable."

"There's no moral equivalence," Mr. Cantor said.

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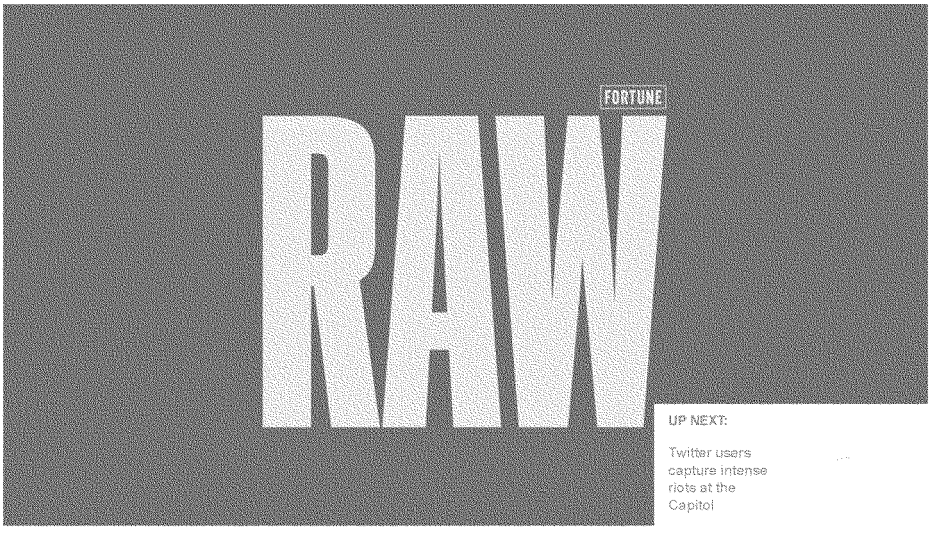
Chinese state media is already using Capitol riots in its anti-U.S. narrative

BY **GRADY MCGREGOR** AND **NAOMI XU ELEGANT**

January 7, 2021 5:16 AM EST



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Hundreds of supporters of President Donald Trump on Wednesday laid siege to the U.S. Capitol building to protest Congress's certification of November's presidential election. The astonishing scenes of violent rioters overtaking police to occupy the

Capitol's hallowed halls rocked the globe, with world leaders expressing alarm at how lawlessness had engulfed the seat of American democracy.

"Disgraceful scenes in U.S. Congress," said U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson. "The United States stands for democracy around the world, and it is now vital that there should be a peaceful and orderly transfer of power."

In China, the central government did not issue a formal statement regarding the Capitol Hill events, but reporters asked Hua Chunying, a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, about the riot at a daily press briefing on Thursday. She said the incident should spark "deep reflection" among U.S. lawmakers regarding how they discuss the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, suggesting that the U.S. is hypocritical in denouncing Beijing's crackdown in the city while it struggles with its own unrest at home.

That same message appeared in Chinese state-run media's coverage of the Capitol riots, indicating that the ugly episode in Washington is already fitting neatly into Beijing's anti-U.S. narrative.

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The Chinese state-run *Global Times* tabloid on Thursday published an article compiling Chinese Internet users' reactions to the unrest. It highlighted comments that described the U.S. events as "karma" and "retribution," and others that called the Capitol storming evidence of "the falling of the beacon of democracy."

The *Global Times* also tweeted a series of side-by-side photos of two events: the siege of the U.S. Capitol and a July 2019 incident in which pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong broke into the city's Legislative Council building. In the caption, the tabloid questioned when U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi—who previously expressed support for Hong Kong's protests—would "say the same about the recent developments in Capitol Hill." (Rioters in Washington, D.C., stormed the Capitol seeking to overturn the results of a legitimate election, whereas Hong Kong protesters entered LegCo calling for democratic reforms like universal suffrage.)

A Thursday article covering the riots from *Beijing News,* a state-owned newspaper, was headlined, "The U.S. has fallen into disarray."

The almost gleeful coverage of turmoil in the U.S. is a trademark of China's state-run media's eagerness to undermine the U.S.'s authority on the world stage at a time when China's government has received international condemnation for political

suppression in Hong Kong. When Black Lives Matter protests swept across the U.S. this past summer, China's state-run outlets accused U.S. politicians of "hypocrisy" for expressing support for protests in Hong Kong while condemning the U.S. demonstrations.

Other articles covering the tumult in the Capitol focused on criticism of the outgoing U.S. President. *The Paper*, a popular digital media outlet that enjoys more editorial leeway than its state-run peers, published an analysis of why Trump is still contesting the election results and encouraging his supporters to protest the results even though there's no chance of overturning them.

According to the article, Trump is obsessed with portraying himself as a strong leader and believes in the "law of the jungle" where the weak are the prey of the strong, a common sentiment—the article says—among white elites from an "Anglo-Saxon cultural background." These and other factors mean he will not accept defeat, according to the article.

The sensational coverage in China's more nationalistic outlets and on social media contrasted with the more straightforward, subdued tone of other state media sources. Xinhua News, China's state-run wire service, tacked the news onto the bottom of its website, with stories that provided a tick-tock rundown of the day's events. On CGTN, the country's English-language, state-backed broadcaster, the Capitol events led the website with similar, straightforward stories.

At the same time, CGTN took the opportunity to take a jab at the U.S. government and alluded to the "double standard" argument employed by other state-run media.

"The whole world is looking at what's going on in Washington, D.C., with "shock and disbelief," Li Shouen, an editor at CGTN, wrote on the website's home page. "It's unclear how it will end, but it mustn't be forgotten that the U.S. itself invented the tactics that are now used there."

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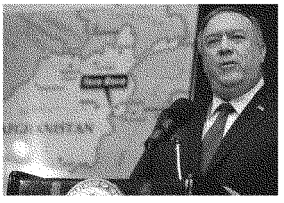

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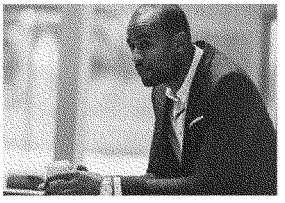
Financial Times



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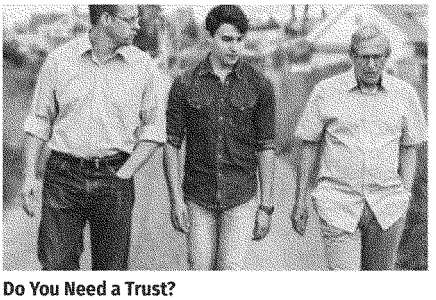

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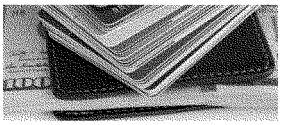

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Armed capitol rallies "will continue" as planned, Boogaloo group member says

cbsnews.com/news/armed-capitol-rallies-will-continue-as-planned-boogaloo-group-member-says/



A group that has been planning since November to have armed rallies in Washington, D.C., as well as state capitols, intends to carry out its events Sunday, despite an unprecedented effort to secure the Capitol.

In the days since supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol in a violent riot that left five dead, officials have installed a massive security apparatus around the complex, where President-elect Joe Biden will be sworn in on January 20. The FBI warned law enforcement this weekabout a group calling for its supporters to come to Washington, D.C., and state capitols armed at their "personal discretion."

That particular call for armed protesters dates back to a November 24 posting on a website called Tree of Liberty, an online forum for members of the extremist anti-government Boogaloo movement. The online flyer posted that day noted that the "Armed march on Capitol Hill and all state capitols" was planned for January 17 and was intended to be peaceful, but encouraged participants to "come armed at your personal discretion." In a follow-up posted four days after rioters breached the Capitol — including some who prosecutors now say were intent on harming the Vice-President and other elected officials — the group wrote that its protest was in "pending status given the events that have taken place."

But in an email to CBS News Friday, an administrator for the website wrote that the group now intends to carry on as planned. CBS News had reached out to an email address listed on the Tree of Liberty website as being the group's press contact.

"The 1/17 events will continue, and safeguards are in place to assure that nothing violent happens concerning the Boogaloo Boys. I cannot speak on behalf of the Proud Boys or MAGA people, and we made it clear that we'd rather not see them there," the press contact, who did not identify themselves, said. The Proud Boys are another group of far right supporters of President Trump.

The Anti-Defamation League, an advocacy group, describes the Boogaloo movement's ideology as "primarily anti-government, anti-authority and anti-police in nature." Since 2019, members of the group have participated in "rallies around gun rights, pandemic restrictions and police-related killings," according to the ADL.

The Justice Department described the Boogaloo movement as a "loosely-connected group of individuals who espouse violent anti-government sentiments" in a December 16, 2020 press release announcing that a Boogaloo member had entered a guilty plea to conspiracy to provide material support to Hamas, designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. government. Another member of the group has been charged in that case and entered a not guilty plea.

In June 2020, a U.S. Air Force Sergeant was arrested for the shooting deaths of a Federal Protective Services officer and a Santa Cruz, California sheriff's deputy. When he was arrested, investigators discovered slogans written in his own blood that linked him to the Boogaloo movement, according to a federal complaint.

In the days before the inauguration, about 25,000 troops will be stationed in and around the Capitol, alongside patrols by the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, the Capitol Police and law enforcement from cities around the country.

In far right chats and forums on Telegram, MeWe and Discord — all popular platforms for both open and invite-only extremist discussion — users have warned each other against participation in the January 17 protests. Many have accused organizers of helping federal officials stage a "trap."

The Tree of Liberty administrator said the group has in fact been in touch with federal law enforcement, despite its anti-government ideology.

"We have made it very clear that we are working with authorities to pick out anybody who has plans to do anything violent and ensure that they are intervened with before the event," they said.

"Don't get me wrong, if I had the choice, I'd not want to be involved with Law Enforcement. I no longer have that option. I was doxxed, and now I either comply or I go to prison," they said. "Doxxed" refers to a practice in which a person's private or personal identifying information is published on the internet by strangers in an attempt to encourage harassment.

The FBI declined to respond to questions about the claim that its investigators have been in contact with Tree of Liberty.

A company that hosted servers for the Tree of Liberty website shuttered it Wednesday. Those who try to visit the site are now automatically forwarded to a YouTube page that plays a music video of Rick Astley's "Never Gonna Give You Up."

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The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

A mob insurrection stoked by false claims of election fraud and promises of violent restoration

By **Greg Miller**, **Greg Jaffe** and **Razzan Nakhlawi**

Jan. 9, 2021 at 8:49 p.m. EST

The problem with devotion to a prophet of falsehoods is that reality eventually intrudes.

By mid-December, President Trump's fraudulent claims of a rigged election were failing in humiliating fashion. Lawsuits were being laughed out of courts. State officials, including Republicans, were refusing to bend to his will and alter the vote. And in a seemingly decisive blow on Dec. 14, the electoral college certified the win for Joe Biden.

It was a disorienting sequence for legions of supporters who believed Trump's lies that the election had been stolen from him but that he would prevail and reclaim it — especially those who had already descended into deeper, more disturbing conspiracies.

Some clung to the hope that Vice President Pence would use his procedural role on Jan. 6 to write an alternative ending. But as it became clear that Pence would refuse with the backing of most Senate Republicans, Trump's most ardent abettors began planning the siege of the Capitol.

"War it is," read a post on TheDonald.win, a rabid pro-Trump forum that exploded in fury at post-election realities. "We kill now," said another user identified only as "AngloMercia."

Sam Andrews, a Missouri gun-range manager and former member of the Oath Keepers movement, appeared on a video that spread rapidly on right-wing sites urging followers to descend on Washington "armed, in large groups." A Trump army, Andrews said, needed to arrive "en-masse in D.C., armed, demanding, not asking, that we get a peaceful resolution on these voter corruption issues."

By Dec. 19, Trump was, as he so often does, feeding these flames with accelerant. "Big protest in D.C. on January 6th," he tweeted. "Be there, will be wild!"

Come they did. And by day's end, insurrectionist fantasies nursed online culminated in one of the most harrowing, horrifying events in the 244-year history of U.S. democracy.

The sacking of the Capitol was enabled by a host of factors, including catastrophic security failures now being investigated. But the temporary seizure of a global seat of power was, at its core, an outgrowth of delusional and destructive forces cultivated online and unleashed by the president.

Among the dead were Brian D. Sicknick, a U.S. Capitol Police officer, and Ashli Babbitt, an Air Force veteran whose social media postings trace a descent into deep-state conspiracies.

Some Americans have traveled a path to radicalization that reminds current and former U.S. national security officials

of the indoctrination of Islamist militants.

Cindy Storer, a former CIA counterterrorism analyst, said that adherents in both cases were drawn to an ideology that emphasizes a loss in control or status. "We had this glorious past and it got screwed up and now we need to do something about it," she said, summarizing the mind-set. What makes such movements turn violent, she said, is the additional belief that some other entity — usually based on race, religion, or nationality — is to blame for perceived humiliation.

"The world used to be a better place and it's someone else's fault that it isn't any longer," Storer said, noting that Trump's entire approach to politics employs this pervasive sense of victimhood and demonization of enemies.

"Trump played on and amplified these messages" leading up to the attack on the Capitol, she said. The conspiracy theories that he put forward, echoed by allies and prominent Republican lawmakers, morphed for thousands of followers into a call for action.

In Greenville, N.C., cardiac sonographer Gena Shinn hung on the president's pronouncements, and by early December had reached what seemed an inescapable conclusion: Her country, the world's greatest democracy, was in peril.

"You have just witnessed a coup," she wrote on Facebook on Dec. 9, "the end of our constitutional republic." In the days that followed, even as Shinn shopped for Christmas presents for her 13-year-old son and decorated her home for the holidays, she spent hours online following Trump's desperate maneuvers to reverse the election.

At times, she had faith that he would prevail. "EVERYONE...CALM DOWN. NO NEED TO PANIC," she wrote when the Supreme Court rejected a lawsuit brought by Republican-led states alleging election fraud. Electoral college delegates might reject the vote tallies on Dec. 14, she prayed. She read a report on Parler, a right-wing alternative to Twitter, suggesting that Biden was a member of the KKK and another promising that Trump's director of national intelligence would soon release a dossier documenting the full extent of foreign interference in the 2020 election.

But the DNI's bombshell report never came, and Shinn's attention shifted to the Jan. 6 protest in Washington that Trump depicted as a final stand against tyranny. "We all need to stand up and fight back. NOW is our time," she wrote in response to posts from groups such as Wildprotest.com touting the rally.

In California, 3,000 miles away, Babbitt, a former Air Force airman and co-owner of a struggling swimming pool supply company, was consumed by the same apocalyptic pronouncements. Her Twitter feed starts in November with retweets, but builds to a conspiratorial crescendo.

"Nothing will stop us...They can try and try but the storm is here and it is descending upon DC in less than 24 hours," she wrote the day before she was shot and killed while trying to breach a police barrier in the Capitol. "Dark to light!" her message ended.

By early January, raiding Congress had emerged as a clear objective in dozens of far-right forums.

"If Congress illegally certifies Biden," a Jan. 4 post on TheDonald.win said, "Trump would have absolutely no choice but to demand us to storm Congress and kill/beat them up for it." Some referred to Trump as GEOTUS: "God Emperor of the United States."

Discussion boards filled with messages on implements to bring for violent confrontation, including riot shields and flagsticks that could also serve as bayonets or clubs for breaking windows. Some sought guidance on how to smuggle weapons into the District of Columbia with its strict gun possession restrictions.

"There is not enough cops in DC to stop what is coming," wrote one user.

Trump continued to goad them. "JANUARY SIXTH, SEE YOU IN DC!" he tweeted on Dec. 30. But his scheme to derail certification would have remained in the realm of fringe fantasy were it not legitimized by some Republican lawmakers.

When Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) declared his intent to object to accepting the Biden victory in Arizona, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) and 11 other Republican senators fell in line behind him.

Their decisions to back Trump's baseless charges further convinced fanatics of their cause's righteousness, said Bruce Hoffman, a terrorism expert and senior fellow for homeland security at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Hoffman described radicalized Trump loyalists as a floating force of intimidation that Trump has been able to mobilize against shifting adversaries and targets. " 'End the lockdown' translates very smoothly into 'stop the steal,' " Hoffman said, referring to rallies last year by Trump supporters against state measures to contain the coronavirus.

The 2017 protests in Charlottesville showed the potential of such a mob to overwhelm law enforcement, Hoffman said. The occupation of the Michigan Capitol last spring, and the exposed plot to take the governor hostage, provided templates for this month's assault in Washington.

"When you have a president pushing them to descend on state capitols and take them over with few consequences," Hoffman said, "the next logical step is to move from states' to the nation's capitol."

One after another, far-right groups declared their violent intentions.

The "Three Percenters" — a name based on the erroneous belief that only 3 percent of U.S. colonists fought the British — posted a short manifesto expressing their preparedness "to take back our country from the pure evil that is conspiring to steal our country away from the American people."

The statement mentioned Cruz and praised Trump lawyers Rudolph W. Giuliani, Sidney Powell and Lin Wood as inspirational figures in this looming battle. But it voiced particular reverence for former U.S. Army Gen. Michael Flynn, who after being pardoned by Trump appeared at rallies, spread falsehoods about the election and urged using the U.S. military to reverse the election outcome.

"We are ready to enter into battle with General Flynn leading the charge," the Three Percenters' statement said.

On the eve of the assault on the Capitol, Flynn delivered an incendiary speech riddled with falsehoods, claiming that more dead voters had cast ballots for Biden than filled the cemeteries of Gettysburg and Normandy.

He then issued a veiled threat to members of Congress. "Those of you who are feeling weak tonight, those of you who don't have the moral fiber in your body — get some tonight because tomorrow we the people are going to be here," Flynn said.

The next morning, Giuliani appeared before the same crowd and called for a "trial by combat." Then, as Pence made his way to the Senate chamber, Trump took the stage — behind sheets of bulletproof glass — and instructed the sea of red-clad supporters to follow the vice president and refuse to accept anything short of victory.

"You'll never take back our country with weakness," Trump said. "You have to show strength, you have to be strong."

Clint Watts, a former FBI counterterrorism analyst, compared the rhetoric of Flynn, Giuliani and Trump with the radicalizing messages from leaders of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State that so worried U.S. security officials in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

"A decade ago, we worried [about] al-Qaeda ideologues inciting violence with speech, sending terrorists into places like [the] Capitol," Watts said in a Jan. 7 post on Twitter. "What did we observe over the past week by our elected leaders, their surrogates and their supporters?"

Like many who gathered in Washington on Wednesday, Shinn and Babbitt weren't especially interested in the speeches from Trump and his allies, which were just restatements of the screeds they had already absorbed on social media.

In an interview, Shinn said she came to Washington for one purpose: to confront lawmakers who Trump insisted had stolen the election. "We went in to storm the Capitol so our voices would be heard," she said.

Before Trump had even finished speaking, Shinn began marching down the Mall toward the Capitol dome. She was joined in the crowd by Babbitt and Thomas Baranyi, a 28-year-old from New Jersey, who wore a Trump baseball cap and a New York Giants sweatshirt.

As he marched, Baranyi, in an interview posted online, recalled gazing up at the U.S. Justice Department building. Through the windows he said he could see federal workers "filming us and laughing at us."

Babbitt was filming herself for her social media followers: "We're walking to the Capitol in a mob. There's an estimated 3 million people here today," she said, using an utterly fictitious number.

A police officer fired and struck Babbitt, who fell back into Baranyi. Her body started to spasm. Blood spurted from her neck, nose and mouth, Baranyi said in an interview posted online. Minutes later Baranyi, who had come to Washington animated by Trump's fantasies, described in a trembling voice the gory reality he had just encountered.

"It was a joke to them until we got inside and then all of a sudden guns came out. We have to do something. People have to do something, because this could be you or your kids," he said, holding up his hand, still coated in Babbitt's blood.

For all its horror, experts said the event could have been — and perhaps was intended to be — scarier and deadlier.

Law enforcement officials have recovered suspected pipe bombs. Images showed armored people inside the Capitol brandishing plastic bands used to cuff prisoners — an indication, Hoffman said, that some intended to take lawmakers

hostage.

Rep. Adam B. Schiff (D-Calif.), a constant target of Trump's ire for his role in the president's impeachment, said that during lawmakers' frantic evacuation he was urged to stay out of sight of the mob by a worried Republican colleague.

"I know these people and can talk to them," the Republican said, according to a statement from Schiff, who did not identify his GOP counterpart. "You are in a whole different situation."

Shinn, who said a police officer pushed her down the Capitol's steps, still clung to the belief that she had been engaged in a righteous, peaceful protest sanctioned by the president.

In its aftermath, she embraced a new delusion advanced by some Republican lawmakers that the violence was the work of leftists who had infiltrated an otherwise peaceful gathering.

"We were unarmed, American citizens who came to Washington to have our voices heard, and now we're being called rioters and domestic terrorists," she said in an interview.

She spent the day after the riot driving around Washington with a friend flying a Trump and QAnon flag from the back of their convertible. She was bruised in her tumble down the steps, but clung as tightly as ever to the president's evidence-free conspiracies.

"We were not only robbed of our vote, we have had our voices silenced," she wrote on her Facebook page as she prepared to return home. "The fight is NOT over..."

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Devlin Barrett, Dalton Bennett and Julie Tate contributed to this report.

Clarification: An earlier version of this story included descriptions of Gena Shinn witnessing Ashli Babbitt's shooting, based on accounts provided by Shinn in interviews. After this story was published, Shinn recanted those statements, stating that she had misled The Post about witnessing Babbitt's shooting and entering the Capitol. The descriptions have been removed.

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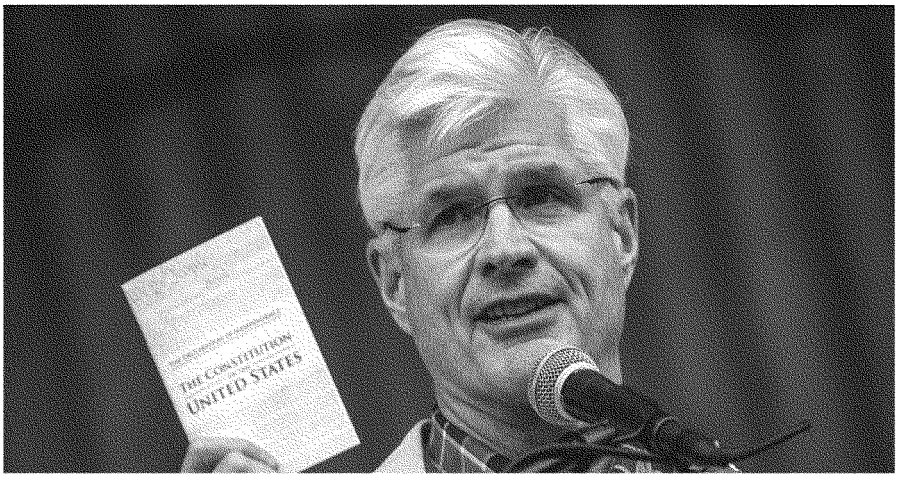
After meeting with Trump, Michigan lawmakers say they see nothing to overturn Biden's win

nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/michigan-gop-lawmakers-heckled-arrival-white-house-meeting-n1248396

November 20, 2020



Nov. 20, 2020, 5:46 PM UTC / Updated Nov. 21, 2020, 12:58 AM UTC

By Heidi Przybyla, Dareh Gregorian and Adam Edelman

Republican state lawmakers from Michigan met with President Donald Trump at the White House on Friday and said afterwards that they were not "made aware of any information that would change the outcome of the election in Michigan."

The White House meeting came as Trump's lawyers are calling for state legislatures, including Michigan's, to name Trump electors in states won by President-elect Joe Biden.

"The entire election, frankly, in all the swing states should be overturned, and the legislatures should make sure that the electors are selected for Trump," campaign lawyer Sidney Powell told Fox Business on Thursday.

In a joint statement issued after their approximately two-hour visit to the White House, state Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and House Speaker Lee Chatfield said they accepted the president's invitation "as we would accept an invitation from any sitting president if asked to meet," but said their position that the voters are the ones who pick the state's electors was unchanged.

As "legislative leaders, we will follow the law and follow the normal process regarding Michigan's electors, just as we have said throughout this election," their statement said.

"Michigan's certification process should be a deliberate process free from threats and intimidation. Allegations of fraudulent behavior should be taken seriously, thoroughly investigated, and if proven, prosecuted to the full extent of the law. And the candidates who win the most votes win elections and Michigan's electoral votes," they added.

A state GOP leader told NBC News before the meeting that Shirkey and Chatfield expected Trump to pressure them to overturn the election results based on unproven claims of fraud and irregularities in Detroit. They were prepared to tell him that while they will pursue probes into "irregularities and potential fraud to avoid future situations," they would uphold Michigan law, which calls for the winner of the vote to get the state's 16 electors, the person said.

Biden won the state by almost 160,000 votes.

"Legally, they don't think they have any actual legal options. It legally cannot happen in Michigan. That's what they're going to tell the president," the person said.

In their statement, Shirkey and Chatfield said they used the meeting to press for "additional federal funds to help Michigan in the fight against Covid-19.

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany portrayed the highly unusual meeting as routine earlier in the day.

"This is not an advocacy meeting," she said. "There will be no one from the campaign there. [The president] routinely meets with lawmakers from across the country."

When Shirkey and other lawmakers arrived at Reagan National Airport in Washington earlier in the day, they were greeted by about 20 protesters yelling "certify the vote" and holding signs that said "Shame."

Biden campaign legal adviser Bob Bauer said, "No state legislature in our country's history ever has done what Donald Trump is apparently agitating for the Michigan State Legislature to do, which is to ignore the results of a popular vote election and wrest control from the voters."

Bauer called the invitation "an abuse of office. It's an open attempt to intimidate election officials. It's absolutely appalling." "It's also pathetic," he added, and "will be unsuccessful."

> No matter the party, when you have an opportunity to meet with the President of the United States, of course you take it. I won't apologize for that. In fact, I'm honored to speak with POTUS and proud to meet with him. And I look forward to our conversation.

> — Lee Chatfield (@LeeChatfield) November 20, 2020

Trump invited the lawmakers to meet with him after reaching out to two other local Republican officials earlier in the week. Trump phoned the pair after they initially voted not to certify the vote in Wayne County, a Democratic stronghold. The pair wound up certifying the vote after a heated public meeting on Tuesday, but then filed affidavits for the Trump campaign the next day — after having spoken with the president the night before — saying they'd changed their minds.

One of the board members, Monica Palmer, said that the president's phone call had nothing to do with her changing her mind, and that he hadn't asked her to do so. "My conversation with the president was about threats coming from the public and my safety — not about rescinding my vote," Palmer said Thursday.

Christine Greig, the state's Democratic House leader, told NBC News that Democrats are concerned that Michigan's GOP might try to pull the "same stunt" on certification at the state level that they did at the county level.

"It's just another component of their plan of attack, to disregard the will of the electors and cast doubt into the election, Greig said. "It's hurting our state, it's hurting our democracy, and they need to stop it."

The Democratic vice chairman of Wayne County's canvassing board, Jonathan Kinloch, told NBC News, "This is unchartered waters for everybody. Nobody would have thought all of this would be occurring. This is totally unfortunate how they have upended all sorts of norms."

One legal expert said in an op-ed the lawmakers could face legal jeopardy themselves if they try to help Trump with any appeal on the state's electors.

"Why, exactly, does President Trump want to see these two men in person, in his office?" wrote Richard Primus, a constitutional law professor at the University of Michigan. "It isn't to offer evidence that Michigan's election was tainted and should therefore be nullified. If he had any such evidence, his lawyers would have presented it in court."

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, a Democrat, declined to comment on the situation to NBC News, saying, "we don't comment on pending investigations."

In a joint op-ed in the Detroit News, Reps. Elissa Slotkin, a Democrat, and Paul Mitchell, a Republican who is retiring, said it was time for Trump to give up the ghost.

"We know many of our residents are disappointed by his loss. But there is simply no indication of massive fraud, wrongdoing or gross error in Michigan's election results," the state's Congress members wrote. "The continued refusal to acknowledge the election results risks corroding our democracy by literally hollowing it out."

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, a former presidential nominee and Michigander, was even more critical of the president's actions.

"Having failed to make even plausible case of widespread fraud or conspiracy before any court of law, the President has now resorted to overt pressure on state and local officials to subvert the will of the people and overturn the election," he tweeted Thursday night. "It is difficult to imagine a worse, more undemocratic action by a sitting American President."

As the D.C. police clear the Capitol grounds, the mayor extends a public emergency.

Jan. 6, 2021
By Helene Cooper, Julian E. Barnes, Eric Schmitt, Jonathan Martin, Maggie Haberman and Mike Ives

The mayor of Washington extended a public emergency on Wednesday night as the local police worked to secure the area around the Capitol.

"Everyone needs to clear the Capitol ground and remove themselves back to their homes states, or wherever they're staying, and let the police do their jobs," Mayor Muriel Bowser told reporters late Wednesday evening.

Ms. Bowser also issued an order extending the District of Columbia's public emergency for 15 days. The order said that people who came to Washington "for the purpose of engaging in violence and destruction" had fired bricks, bricks, bottles, guns and chemical irritants. "Their destructive and riotous behavior has the potential to spread beyond the Capitol," it said.

A number of regional police departments, as well as the National Guard, helped the Metropolitan Police Department establish a perimeter around the Capitol to help enforce an overnight curfew that took effect at 6 p.m., said Robert J. Contee, the department's chief.

Chief Contee added that some of the Capitol Police officers who were injured during demonstrations on Wednesday were still on duty.

"Although they are injured, they are still working — they're working very hard to regain control of the Capitol," he said.

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy told reporters that all 1,100 members of the D.C. National Guard had been mobilized on Wednesday afternoon to support the local police. He said that several federal law enforcement entities would be working to determine "how a clearing operation may be conducted."

The decision to mobilize the D.C. National Guard — by Secretary McCarthy and Christopher C. Miller, the acting defense secretary — came as a pro-Trump mob breached the Capitol earlier in the day.

Defense and administration officials said it was Vice President Mike Pence, not President Trump, who approved the order to deploy the D.C. National Guard. It was unclear why the president, who incited his supporters to storm the Capitol and who is still the commander in chief, did not give the order.

President Trump initially rebuffed and resisted requests to mobilize the National Guard, according to a person with knowledge of the events. It required intervention from the White House counsel, Pat Cipollone, among other officials, the person familiar with the events said.

F.B.I. agents went to the Capitol grounds on Wednesday to help the police on the scene protect the building and the public. A handful of the F.B.I. agents arrived in camouflage and bearing shields and machine guns late in the afternoon outside the secure location where the senators were being held.

And at the request of U.S. National Guard officials, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York will deploy 1,000 members of the New York National Guard to Washington for up to two weeks, he said in a statement Wednesday night.

Helene Cooper is a Pentagon correspondent. She was previously an editor, diplomatic correspondent and White House correspondent, and was part of the team awarded the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting, for its coverage of the Ebola epidemic. @helenecooper

Julian E. Barnes is a national security reporter based in Washington, covering the intelligence agencies. Before joining The Times in 2018, he wrote about security matters for The Wall Street Journal. @julianbarnes • Facebook

Eric Schmitt is a senior writer who has traveled the world covering terrorism and national security. He was also the Pentagon correspondent. A member of the Times staff since 1983, he has shared three Pulitzer Prizes. @EricSchmittNYT

Jonathan Martin is a national political correspondent. He has reported on a range of topics, including the 2016 presidential election and several state and congressional races, while also writing for Sports, Food and the Book Review. He is also a CNN political analyst. @jmartnyt

Maggie Haberman is a White House correspondent. She joined The Times in 2015 as a campaign correspondent and was part of a team that won a Pulitzer Prize in 2018 for reporting on President Trump's advisers and their connections to Russia. @maggieNYT

Here's the latest from **Mob Attack, Incited by Trump, Delays Election Certification**

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- 'I thought we'd have to fight our way out': Scenes of mayhem from the Capitol.

See all

HISTORIC FIRST STATEWIDE AUDIT OF PAPER BALLOTS UPHOLDS RESULT OF PRESIDENTIAL RACE

(ATLANTA)-Today, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger announced the results of the Risk Limiting Audit of Georgia's presidential contest, which upheld and reaffirmed the original outcome produced by the machine tally of votes cast. Due to the tight margin of the race and the principles of risk-limiting audits, this audit was a full manual tally of all votes cast. The audit confirmed that the original machine count accurately portrayed the winner of the election. The results of the audit can be viewed HERE , HERE , and HERE .

"Georgia's historic first statewide audit reaffirmed that the state's new secure paper ballot voting system accurately counted and reported results," said Secretary Raffensperger. "This is a credit to the hard work of our county and local elections officials who moved quickly to undertake and complete such a momentous task in a short period of time."

"Georgia's first statewide audit successfully confirmed the winner of the chosen contest and should give voters increased confidence in the results," said Ben Adida, Executive Director of VotingWorks. "We were proud to work with Georgia on this historic audit. The difference between the reported results and the full manual tally is well within the expected error rate of hand-counting ballots, and the audit was a success."

By law, Georgia was required to conduct a Risk Limiting Audit of a statewide race following the November elections. Understanding the importance of clear and reliable results for such an important contest, Secretary Raffensperger selected the presidential race in Georgia for the audit. Meeting the confidence threshold required by law for the audit meant conducting a full manual tally of every ballot cast in Georgia.

The Risk Limiting Audit reaffirmed the outcome of the presidential race in Georgia as originally reported, with Joe Biden leading President Donald Trump in the state.

The audit process also led to counties catching making mistakes they made in their original count by not uploading all memory cards. Those counties uploaded the memory cards and re-certified their results, leading to increased accuracy in the results the state will certify.

The differential of the audit results from the original machine counted results is well within the expected margin of human error that occurs when hand-counting ballots. A 2012 study by Rice University and Clemson University found that "hand counting of votes in postelection audit or recount procedures can result in error rates of up to 2 percent." In Georgia's recount, the highest error rate in any county recount was .73%. Most counties found no change in their finally tally. The majority of the remaining counties had changes of fewer than ten ballots.

Because the margin is still less than 0.5%, the President can request a recount after certification of the results. That recount will be conducted by rescanning all paper ballots.

Click here for the Risk Limiting Audit Report

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House, With Some G.O.P. Support, Votes to Impeach Trump a Historic Second Time

Last Updated Jan. 21, 2021

The House impeached President Trump for inciting an insurrection against the government, and 10 Republicans joined Democrats to do so. Senator Mitch McConnell said he would not agree to use emergency powers to bring the Senate back into session for a trial before Jan. 19.

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Here's what you need to know:

- The House impeaches Trump for 'incitement of insurrection,' setting up a Senate trial.
- Now that the House has impeached Trump, what happens next?
- These are the 10 Republicans who voted in favor of impeachment.
- Trump posts video condemning Capitol violence but does not mention his role in instigating it.
- Lawmakers recount feeling unsafe because of colleagues' behavior during Capitol siege.
- 'It is never too late to do the right thing.' Read key quotes from Democrats and Republicans on impeachment.
- The 'People's House' looked like a war zone during the impeachment debate, one week after the Capitol riot.

The House impeaches Trump for 'incitement of insurrection,' setting up a Senate trial.

The House on Wednesday impeached President Trump for inciting a violent insurrection against the United States government, as 10 members of the president's party joined Democrats to charge him with high crimes and misdemeanors for an unprecedented second time.

Reconvening under the threat of continued violence and the protection of thousands of National Guard troops, the House was determined to hold Mr. Trump to account just one week before he was to leave office. At issue was his role in encouraging a mob that attacked the Capitol one week ago while Congress met to affirm President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s victory, forcing lawmakers to flee for their lives in a deadly rampage.

The House adopted a single article of impeachment, voting 232 to 197 to charge Mr. Trump with "inciting violence against the government of the United States" and requesting his immediate removal from office and disqualification from ever holding one again.

Ten Republicans joined Democrats in voting to impeach: Representatives Liz Cheney of Wyoming, the party's No. 3 leader in the House; Jaime Herrera Beutler of Washington; John Katko of New York; Adam Kinzinger of Illinois; Fred Upton of Michigan; Dan Newhouse of Washington; Peter Meijer of Michigan; Anthony Gonzalez of Ohio; David Valadao of California; and Tom Rice of South Carolina.

The defections were a remarkable break from the head of the party by Republicans, who voted unanimously against impeaching Mr. Trump just over a year ago.

The vote set the stage for the second Senate trial of Mr. Trump in a year, though senators were not expected to convene to sit in judgment before Jan. 20, when Mr. Biden will take the oath of office.

The last proceeding, over Mr. Trump's attempts to pressure Ukraine to smear Mr. Biden, was a partisan affair.

This time, Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader, was said to support the effort as a means of purging his party of Mr. Trump, setting up a political and constitutional showdown that could shape the course of American politics when the nation remains dangerously divided.

In a note to Republican colleagues on Wednesday, Mr. McConnell did not deny that he backed the impeachment push, but he said that he had "not made a final decision on how I will vote, and I intend to listen to the legal arguments when they are presented to the Senate."

Mr. Trump showed no contrition for his actions. But in the run-up to the vote on Wednesday, he issued a statement urging his supporters to remain peaceful as federal authorities warned of a nationwide wave of violence surrounding Mr. Biden's inauguration.

"There must be no violence, no lawbreaking and no vandalism of any kind," the president said in a statement that was read by Republicans from the House floor. "That is not what I stand for, and it is not what America stands for. I call on all Americans to help ease tensions and calm tempers."

President Trump is the first president to be impeached twice. Doug Mills/The New York Times

The House's vote was historic. Only two other presidents have been impeached; none has been impeached twice, by such a large bipartisan margin, or so close to leaving office.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California implored colleagues before the vote to embrace "a constitutional remedy that will ensure that the Republic will be safe from this man who is so resolutely determined to tear down the things that we hold dear and that hold us together."

"He must go. He is a clear and present danger to the nation that we all love," she said, adding later, "It gives me no pleasure to say this — it breaks my heart."

Republicans, who stood unanimously behind Mr. Trump in 2019 during his first impeachment, were split over the charge this time.

Representative Kevin McCarthy of California, the House Republican leader, spoke out against impeachment, warning that it would "further fan the flames of partisan division." But he also pinned blame on Mr. Trump for the attack and batted down false suggestions from some of his colleagues that antifa had actually been responsible for the siege, not loyalists to Mr. Trump. He proposed censuring the president instead of impeaching him.

"The president bears responsibility for Wednesday's attack on Congress by mob rioters," Mr. McCarthy said. "He should have immediately denounced the mob when he saw what was unfolding."

Mr. Biden also called for holding the president and the rioters accountable and applauded the vote in the House. "It was a bipartisan vote cast by members who followed the Constitution and their conscience," he said in a statement on Wednesday night.

Democrats and some Republicans had tried — briefly — to take another course. They urged Mr. Trump to resign voluntarily and voted late Tuesday to call on Vice President Mike Pence to invoke the 25th Amendment to wrest the powers of the presidency from Mr. Trump for the remainder of his term. Mr. Trump refused, and so did Mr. Pence.

— *Nicholas Fandos*

Now that the House has impeached Trump, what happens next?

The House on Wednesday impeached President Trump for a second time, charging him with "incitement of insurrection" one week after he egged on a mob of supporters that stormed the Capitol while Congress met to formalize President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s victory.

Minutes after the vote, Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader, in a statement threw cold water on the prospect of the Senate beginning an impeachment trial before Mr. Biden is inaugurated next Wednesday. He endorsed a later start to the proceedings and effectively handed responsibility for the process to Democrats, who will soon control the chamber.

"Given the rules, procedures, and Senate precedents that govern presidential impeachment trials, there is simply no chance that a fair or serious trial could conclude before President-elect Biden is sworn in next week," Mr. McConnell said. "In light of this reality, I believe it will best serve our nation if Congress and the executive branch spend the next seven days completely focused on facilitating a safe inauguration and an orderly transfer of power to the incoming Biden administration."

Here's what we know about what happens next.

How does the impeachment process work?

After the House has impeached the president — the equivalent of an indictment in a criminal case — members of the Senate consider whether to remove him, holding a trial in which senators act as the jury. The test, as set by the Constitution, is whether the president has committed "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors."

How can the Senate hold a trial if Trump is gone?

There is no precedent for the Senate holding an impeachment trial after a president has left office, but it has done so for other government officials.

Democrats who control the House can choose when to send their article of impeachment to the Senate, at which point that chamber would have to immediately move to begin the trial. But even if the House immediately transmitted the charge to the other side of the Capitol, an agreement between Republican and Democratic leaders in the Senate would be needed to take it up before Jan. 19, a day before Mr. Biden is inaugurated.

Since Mr. McConnell said on Wednesday that he would not agree, the trial cannot start until after Mr. Biden is president. That could clog the Senate floor in the early days of Mr. Biden's administration, at a time when he will be eager to have the chamber confirm senior members of his cabinet.

Would impeaching Trump disqualify him from holding office again?

Conviction in an impeachment trial would not automatically disqualify Mr. Trump from future public office.

But if the Senate were to convict him, the Constitution allows a subsequent vote to bar an official from holding "any office of honor, trust or profit under the United States." That vote would require only a simple majority of senators.

There is no precedent, however, for disqualifying a president from future office, and the issue could end up before the Supreme Court.

— *Catie Edmondson and Nicholas Fandos*

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These are the 10 Republicans who voted in favor of impeachment.

As the House voted Wednesday to formally charge President Trump with inciting violence against the government of the United States, exactly one week after the Capitol was breached by an angry mob of Trump loyalists, 10 Republicans cast their votes in favor of impeachment.

It was the largest number of lawmakers to ever vote to impeach a president from their own party; just five Democrats voted to impeach President Bill Clinton, and not a single Republican voted in favor of impeaching Mr. Trump in 2019.

House Republican leaders said they would not formally lobby members of the party against voting to impeach the president this time.

Representative John Katko of New York was the first Republican to publicly announce that he would back impeachment. Not holding the president accountable for his actions would be "a direct threat to the future of our democracy," he said.

Representative Liz Cheney of Wyoming, the No. 3 House Republican, said on Tuesday evening that she would vote to impeach, citing the president's role in an insurrection that caused "death and destruction in the most sacred space in our republic."

Representative Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, a frequent critic of Mr. Trump, joined his Republican colleagues on Tuesday evening, saying the nation was in uncharted waters. He said that Mr. Trump "encouraged an angry mob to storm the United States Capitol to stop the counting of electoral votes."

Representative Fred Upton of Michigan said he would vote to impeach after Mr. Trump "expressed no regrets" for what had happened at the Capitol.

Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler of Washington State said, "The president's offenses, in my reading of the Constitution, were impeachable based on the indisputable evidence we already have." (An earlier version of this item incorrectly stated which state Ms. Herrera Beutler represents.)

Representative Dan Newhouse of Washington State announced that he was backing impeachment, attacking his party's core argument, that the process was being rushed. "I will not use process as an excuse," he said during the impeachment debate, to cheers and applause from Democrats. Mr. Newhouse also offered a mea culpa, chiding himself and other Republicans for "not speaking out sooner" against the president.

Representative Peter Meijer of Michigan said that Mr. Trump had "betrayed his oath of office by seeking to undermine our constitutional process, and he bears responsibility for inciting the insurrection we suffered last week."

Representative Anthony Gonzalez of Ohio said Vice President Mike Pence and members of the House and Senate "had their lives put in grave danger as a result of the president's actions," adding, "When I consider the full scope of events leading up to Jan. 6, including the president's lack of response as the United States Capitol was under attack, I am compelled to support impeachment."

Representative David Valadao of California complained that the process had been rushed but said: "Based on the facts before me, I have to go with my gut and vote my conscience. I voted to impeach President Trump. His inciting rhetoric was un-American, abhorrent and absolutely an impeachable offense. It's time to put country over politics."

Representative Tom Rice of South Carolina criticized Mr. Trump's response to the siege and concluded: "I have backed this president through thick and thin for four years. I campaigned for him and voted for him twice. But this utter failure is inexcusable."

Four Republicans did not vote: Representatives Kay Granger of Texas, Andy Harris of Maryland, Greg Murphy of North Carolina and Daniel Webster of Florida.

Nicholas Fandos and Glenn Thrush contributed reporting.

— *Thomas Kaplan and John Eligon*

Trump posts video condemning Capitol violence but does not mention his role in instigating it.

Within hours of becoming the first president to be impeached twice, President Trump posted a five-minute video on a White House Twitter account on Wednesday evening condemning the storming of the Capitol complex by his supporters last week and urged his followers to avoid a repeat in "the coming days both here in Washington and across the country."

Mr. Trump recorded the video under pressure from aides, who have warned him that he faces potential legal exposure for the riot, which occurred immediately after a speech in which he urged them to "fight" the results of the election, which he falsely claimed was stolen.

The president did not mention his own role in instigating the violence last week. On Tuesday, he defended the remarks he made at a rally before his supporters marched to the Capitol as "totally appropriate" and said the effort by Congress to impeach and convict him was "causing tremendous anger."

He also did not acknowledge the loss of life or his own false claims of the election being stolen in the two months before the rally last week.

The video came a short time after Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader, made clear in a statement that he was open to voting to convict the president on the article of impeachment — a sea change from a year ago, when Mr. McConnell whipped fellow senators against a conviction in the president's first impeachment trial. Just before the House impeached him on Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Trump issued a statement to his supporters calling on Americans to "ease tensions and calm tempers."

In the video, president did not mention the five people who died as a result of the violence at the Capitol. But he did go further in his language than he has at any point, as law enforcement is bracing for new insurgencies in Washington and around the country next week.

"As I have said, the incursion of the U.S. Capitol struck at the very heart of our Republic," Mr. Trump said, his most forceful statement after a few attempts that offered a fig leaf to his supporters last week. "It angered and appalled millions of Americans across the political spectrum."

"I want to be very clear," he continued. "I unequivocally condemn the violence that we saw last week. Violence and vandalism have absolutely no place in our country and no place in our movement. Making America great again has always been about defending the rule of law" and supporting law enforcement officials.

During the riot by his supporters, a Capitol Police officer sustained extensive head injuries and later died.

As a candidate in 2016, Mr. Trump once encouraged rally attendees to physically attack protesters. But in the video on Wednesday, he said that "mob violence goes against everything I believe in and everything our movement stands for. No true supporter of mine could ever endorse political violence."

"If you do any of these things, you are not supporting our movement, you are attacking it, and you are attacking our country," he said. "We cannot tolerate it."

Of the reports of new demonstrations next week, Mr. Trump said, "There must be no violence, no lawbreaking and no vandalism of any kind."

Michael Gold contributed reporting.

— *Maggie Haberman*

Lawmakers recount feeling unsafe because of colleagues' behavior during Capitol siege.

Democratic lawmakers are voicing safety concerns in the week after the storming of the Capitol and criticizing the actions of some of their Republican colleagues regarding security in the days around the attack.

Sarah Groh, the chief of staff to Representative Ayanna S. Pressley, Democrat of Massachusetts, told The Boston Globe on Wednesday that when Ms. Groh tried to push the panic buttons in the Capitol, she discovered that all of the ones in Ms. Pressley's office had been inexplicably "torn out."

Representative Jamaal Bowman, Democrat of New York, tweeted on Wednesday that his office also did not have panic buttons during the assault. And Democratic members of Congress on Wednesday accused unnamed Republicans of giving tours of the Capitol before the violent siege.

"Those members of Congress who had groups coming through the Capitol that I saw on Jan. 5, a reconnaissance for the next day, those members of Congress that incited this violent crowd," said Representative Mikie Sherrill, Democrat of New Jersey, "I'm going to see that they're held accountable."

The Government Accountability Office, a nonpartisan federal watchdog agency, has signaled that it would open an investigation that would examine what roles members of Congress might have played, according to Representative Jason Crow, Democrat of Colorado, who requested the inquiry.

The inspector general of the Capitol Police is also opening a potentially wide-ranging investigation into security breaches connected to the siege that could determine the extent of involvement of some Capitol Police officers, according to a senior congressional aide with direct knowledge of the investigation.

Representative James E. Clyburn of South Carolina, the Democratic whip, told CNN this week that although he took shelter in his unmarked office in the Capitol during the attack, the mob was able to find where he was.

"That to me indicates that something untoward may have been going on," he said.

In a livestream on Tuesday night, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York said she feared that some of her colleagues would put her in danger by revealing her location.

"I didn't even feel safe around other members of Congress," Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said in an hourlong livestream posted on Instagram. "There were QAnon and white supremacist sympathizers and, frankly, white supremacist members of Congress in that extraction point who I know, and who I had felt would disclose my location, who would create opportunities to allow me to be hurt, kidnapped, etc."

Ms. Pressley echoed Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, writing on Twitter that she did not feel safe sheltering with certain lawmakers.

"The second I realized our 'safe room' from the violent white supremacist mob included treasonous, white supremacist, anti masker Members of Congress who incited the mob in the first place, I exited," Ms. Pressley said.

Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and Ms. Pressley are both members of "The Squad," a group of progressive lawmakers of color who have been verbally attacked by conservatives and the president.

Representative Lauren Boebert, Republican of Colorado, drew criticism from Democrats for tweeting about Speaker Nancy Pelosi's location during the attack, despite reports that lawmakers were instructed by security officials not to reveal their whereabouts. Ms. Boebert later dismissed the seriousness of her actions.

"They accuse me of live-tweeting the speaker's presence after she had been safely removed from the Capitol, as if I was revealing some big secret, when in fact this removal was also being broadcast on TV," Ms. Boebert said in a statement on Monday.

In the week leading up to the Capitol siege, Ms. Boebert, a fiery gun-rights activist, released an ad declaring that she would carry her Glock with her on the streets of Washington, including on her way to work. On her way to the House chamber for the impeachment vote on Wednesday, Ms. Boebert caused a spectacle by pushing her way through metal detectors, which were installed as part of heightened security measures after the attack, and ignoring police officers who asked her to stop.

Ms. Boebert and other freshman Republicans, such as Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and Madison Cawthorn of North Carolina, have questioned or outright flouted guidelines meant to protect lawmakers from violence, intruders or the coronavirus.

"I did not know if I was going to make it to the end of that day alive," Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said during her livestream. "Not just in a general sense, but also in a very, very specific sense."

Luke Broadwater contributed reporting.

— *Aishvarya Kavi*

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'It is never too late to do the right thing.' Read key quotes from Democrats and Republicans on impeachment.

Gathered in the Capitol just one week after it came under violent attack by a pro-Trump mob, the House engaged in an emotional debate on Wednesday over whether to impeach President Trump for his role in inciting the violence.

Nearly every Democrat spoke out in support of impeachment and a handful of Republicans pledged to join them.

But in the run-up to the vote, the two parties traded bitter jabs and dueling arguments for and against using the Constitution's gravest remedy just days before Mr. Trump was to leave office. Democrats uniformly described the president's conduct in scathing terms, arguing that impeachment was an appropriate remedy. A few Republicans defended him, but most others simply argued that a rush to impeach Mr. Trump without a hearing or an investigation raised constitutional questions.

Democrats

Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California: "The president must be impeached and I believe the president must be convicted by the Senate, a constitutional remedy that will ensure that the republic will be safe from this man who is so resolutely determined to tear down the things that we hold dear and that hold us together. It gives me no pleasure to say this. It breaks my heart."

Representative Jamie Raskin of Maryland, the lead impeachment manager: "It's a bit much to be hearing that these people would not be trying to destroy our government and kill us if we just weren't so mean to them."

Representative Adam B. Schiff of California: "America has been through a civil war, world wars, a Great Depression, pandemics, McCarthyism, and now a Trumpist and white nationalist insurrection. And yet our democracy endures.

"It endures because at every juncture, every pivotal moment, when evil threatens to overtake good, patriotic Americans step forward to say, enough. This is one of those moments."

Representative Hakeem Jeffries of New York: "Donald Trump is a living, breathing impeachable offense. It is what it is."

Representative Steny H. Hoyer of Maryland, the majority leader: "Upon the foundations of virtue, reason and patient wisdom laid down by George Washington as our first president, Donald Trump has constructed a glass palace of lies, fear-mongering, and sedition. Last Wednesday on January 6, the nation and the world watched it shatter to pieces. There could be no mistaking any longer the kind of man sitting in the Oval Office, or his intentions and capabilities. The curtain has been pulled back. The office to which he was elected could not temper or reform him."

"That is not true of this president. And therefore, he ought to be removed. And we have that opportunity to do so. Is there little time left? Yes. But it is never too late to do the right thing."

Representative Ilhan Omar of Minnesota: "For years we have been asked to turn a blind eye to the criminality, corruption and blatant disregard to the rule of law by the tyrant president we have in the White House. We as a nation can no longer look away."

Representative Cedric Richmond of Louisiana, a Democrat leaving to join the Biden White House: "Simply put, we told you so."

Representative Joaquin Castro of Texas: "Let me ask you a question. What do you think they would have done if they had gotten in? What do you think they would have done to you? And who do you think sent them here?"

Representative Cori Bush of Missouri: "The 117th Congress must understand that we have a mandate to legislate in defense of Black lives. The first step in that process is to root out white supremacy, starting with impeaching the white supremacist-in-chief."

Republicans

Representative Jim Jordan of Ohio: "It's always been about getting the president, no matter what. It's an obsession, an obsession that has now broadened. It's not just about impeachment anymore, it's about canceling, as I've said. Canceling the president and anyone that disagrees with them."

Representative Tom McClintock of California: "If we impeached every politician who gave a fiery speech to a crowd of partisans, this Capitol would be deserted. That's what the president did, that is all he did.

"He specifically told the crowd to protest peacefully and patriotically. And the vast majority of them did. But every movement has a lunatic fringe."

Representative Dan Newhouse of Washington State: "The president took an oath to defend the constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic. Last week there was a domestic threat at the door of the Capitol and he did nothing to stop it. That is why with a heavy heart and clear resolve I will vote yes on these articles of impeachment."

Representative Matt Gaetz of Florida: "I denounce political violence from all ends of the spectrum, but make no mistake, the left in America has incited far more political violence than the right. For months, our cities burned, police stations burned, our businesses were shattered, and they said nothing. Or they cheer-led for it and fund-raised for it and they allowed it to happen in the greatest country in the world.

"Now some have cited the metaphor that the president lit the flame. Well, they lit actual flames. Actual fires."

Representative Guy Reschenthaler of Pennsylvania: Mr. Reschenthaler condemned the violence that had taken place, but was one of the few Republicans opposing the impeachment charge on its merits, disputing that Mr. Trump had incited violence.

"At his rally, President Trump urged attendees to, 'peacefully and patriotically make your voices heard.' There was no mention of violence, let alone calls to action."

Representative Nancy Mace of South Carolina: "The U.S. House of Representatives has every right to impeach the president of the United States. But what we're doing today, rushing this impeachment in an hour- or two-hour-long debate on the floor of this chamber, bypassing Judiciary, poses great questions about the constitutionality of this process."

Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler of Washington State, who supports impeachment: "I'm not afraid of losing my job, but I am afraid my country will fail."

Representative Chip Roy of Texas: Mr. Roy said Mr. Trump's conduct was impeachable, but warned Democrats that their charge would "send us down the perilous path of cleansing political speech in the public square."

— *Nicholas Fandos and Zach Montague*

The 'People's House' looked like a war zone during the impeachment debate, one week after the Capitol riot.

Throngs of armed, camouflage fatigue-clad members of the National Guard ringed the Capitol and lined its halls on Wednesday as the House met to debate impeaching President Trump for inciting an insurrection, one week to the day after a mob egged on by Mr. Trump stormed the building.

The heavily militarized presence made for a jarring and sobering atmosphere in a building often known as the "People's House." It provided a surreal backdrop for a historic debate that unfolded in a House chamber newly outfitted by magnetometers near where the violent rioters tried to force their way in last week as terrified lawmakers, staff members and journalists took shelter on the other side.

There appeared to be troops at every corner: sleeping on the marble floors, curled up at the foot of statues and busts, lining up for coffee and food in the 24-hour snack bar, standing in Statuary Hall, visibly in awe of the marble likenesses of the nation's founders and leaders. A group of Black troops posed for a photo with the statue of Rosa Parks; dozens more troops were splayed out in Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitors Center, in the shadow of a model of the Statue of Freedom, which sits atop the dome.

"The field trip is leaving without us," one Guardsman could be heard joking as a group of soldiers moved through the building.

Some lawmakers lamented the threat that made their presence necessary, with many Democrats irate about the role they said their own Republican colleagues had played in whipping up the rage of the mob that assaulted the Capitol, putting the lives of members of Congress in danger.

"It should not and will not be tolerated," Representative Hakeem Jeffries, Democrat of New York, told reporters. "And that's why extraordinary security measures have been taken."

Lawmakers had to walk through the new magnetometers in response to concerns about Republicans bringing guns to the House floor. Several Republicans grumbled about the added layer of security. Typically, lawmakers are allowed to bypass the magnetometers at the entrances to the buildings.

Outside the Capitol, red, white and blue bunting had been hung to adorn the building for President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s inauguration, which was to take place a week from Wednesday.

Near the House floor as lawmakers debated the impeachment charge, an aide to Speaker Nancy Pelosi wheeled out a lectern bearing her seal — the same lectern one of the rioters was spotted carrying across the Rotunda during the siege. Hours later, Ms. Pelosi spoke from behind it before signing the article, formalizing Mr. Trump's impeachment for sparking the mayhem.

— *Emily Cochrane*

Pelosi names nine Democrats to lead the impeachment effort.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Tuesday named nine Democrats as managers of the impeachment trial of President Trump on charges of inciting a violent mob of his supporters to storm the Capitol, where rioters ransacked the seat of American government and killed a Capitol Police officer.

The nine managers, all lawyers, have expertise in constitutional law, civil rights and law enforcement. They will be the new faces of the impeachment drive after Americans last year grew accustomed to seeing Representatives Adam Schiff, Democrat of California and the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, and Jerrold Nadler, Democrat of New York and the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, as the leaders of Mr. Trump's first impeachment trial.

The managers come from across the country and represent different ideological wings of the party. Of the nine, seven are people of color, L.G.B.T.Q. or women.

"It is their constitutional and patriotic duty to present the case for the president's impeachment and removal," Ms. Pelosi said of the managers. "They will do so guided by their great love of country, determination to protect our democracy and loyalty to our oath to the Constitution."

Ms. Pelosi named Representative Jamie Raskin, a constitutional lawyer from Maryland who drafted the impeachment article, as the lead manager of Mr. Trump's trial. Mr. Raskin, who lost his 25-year-old son to suicide on New Year's Eve and then survived the mob attack, is a professor of constitutional law at American University's Washington College of Law.

"I'm honored to be on a team with extremely distinguished lawyers and representatives," Mr. Raskin said. "We have a tremendous responsibility on our shoulders right now."

The other impeachment managers are: Representatives Diana DeGette of Colorado, a lawyer with a civil rights background; David Cicilline of Rhode Island, a former public defender; Joaquin Castro of Texas, a lawyer; Eric Swalwell of California, a former prosecutor; Ted Lieu of California, a former Air Force officer and prosecutor; Stacey Plaskett of the Virgin Islands, a former prosecutor; Joe Neguse of Colorado, a lawyer; and Madeleine Dean of Pennsylvania, also a lawyer.

— *Luke Broadwater and Emily Cochrane*

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Republican lawmakers are accused of giving Capitol tours to insurrectionists before the riot as new inquiries are opened.

Democratic members of Congress on Wednesday accused unnamed Republicans of giving tours of the Capitol to insurrectionists ahead of last week's deadly siege of the Capitol, as federal agencies opened two new investigations into the extent to which Capitol Police and some lawmakers were complicit in the mob attack.

The inspector general of the Capitol Police is opening a potentially wide-ranging investigation into security breaches connected to the siege that could determine the extent to which some Capitol Police officers were involved, according to a senior congressional aide with direct knowledge of the investigation. The inspector general will suspend all other projects until the investigation is complete, the aide said.

Three officers have been suspended, and 17 others are under investigation by the force's Office of Professional Responsibility.

The Government Accountability Office, a nonpartisan federal watchdog agency, has also signaled it will open an investigation that will include the roles that members of Congress may have played in inciting the mob seeking to overturn the results of the election, according to the congressman who requested the inquiry, Representative Jason Crow, Democrat of Colorado.

Mr. Crow, a former Army Captain, asked the comptroller general of the United States, who is part of the agency, last week to initiate a broad investigation into many aspects of the security breach, including the roles members of Congress played.

Mr. Crow, whose request letter was signed by 107 of his colleagues, said Wednesday that he has been informed the investigation is underway.

"To the extent there were members of the House that were complicit, and I believe there were, we will pursue appropriate remedies including expulsion and a prohibition from holding elective office for the rest of their lives," Mr. Crow said in an interview. "They will of course be subject to criminal investigation and prosecution if that's what the facts of the investigation show."

The tours on the eve of the riot came to light after Representative Mikie Sherrill, Democrat of New Jersey and a former Navy pilot, said Tuesday night on Facebook without offering evidence that she knew of members of Congress who gave "reconnaissance" tours to rioters ahead of the attack.

"Those members of Congress who had groups coming through the Capitol that I saw on Jan. 5, a reconnaissance for the next day, those members of Congress that incited this violent crowd," Ms. Sherrill said, "those members who attempted to help our president undermine our democracy, I'm going to see that they're held accountable."

On Wednesday, about 30 lawmakers joined Ms. Sherrill in requesting an investigation from the acting House and Senate sergeants-at-arms and the Capitol Police into what Ms. Sherrill called "suspicious behavior" and access given to visitors to the Capitol complex the day before the riot.

"Many of the members who signed this letter, including those of us who have served in the military and are trained to recognize suspicious activity, as well as various members of our staff, witnessed an extremely high number of outside groups in the complex on Tuesday, January 5," the lawmakers wrote. They called the visits suspicious, noting that tours have been restricted because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Representative Tim Ryan, Democrat of Ohio, said lawmakers were aware of the tours but are now looking at them in a new light given the attack. He said they included "handfuls" of people and that the authorities were aware of them. "Now you look back on certain things and you look at them differently so, yeah, we're looking into it," he said.

Pressure is mounting on the Republican members of Congress who associated themselves with far-right extremist groups in the days leading up to the mob attack. Several of Mr. Trump's most ardent supporters, including Representatives Mo Brooks of Alabama and Paul Gosar and Andy Biggs, both of Arizona, have been accused of helping plan the Jan. 6 rally that led to the violent attack on the Capitol.

— *Luke Broadwater*

Biden's inauguration celebration will include virtual performances and a prime-time special.

In the latest example of its virtual programming in lieu of mass gatherings and ballroom celebrations, President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s inaugural committee announced Wednesday that a 90-minute prime-time television special will air on Jan. 20, hosted by Tom Hanks and featuring musical acts and appearances by Mr. Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

"Celebrating America" will air starting at 8:30 p.m. on ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC and MSNBC, and it will be streamed on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Twitch, among other online platforms, according to a statement from the Presidential Inaugural Committee.

The event's entertainers will include Ant Clemons, Jon Bon Jovi, Demi Lovato and Justin Timberlake.

Presidential inaugurations traditionally draw huge crowds to Washington for parades, performances and evening balls and parties. But coronavirus precautions have made that impossible this year, along with heightened security following last week's riot at the Capitol.

Reminiscent of programming during the summer Democratic National Convention, whose traditional in-person events were also largely moved online, "the program will highlight the strength of our democracy, the perseverance of our people, and our ability to come together during trying times and emerge stronger than ever before," the Presidential Inaugural Committee said, adding that it would celebrate "frontline workers, health care workers, teachers, citizens giving back, and those who are breaking barriers."

The committee has previously announced other virtual and crowd-free activities, including a "virtual parade" following Mr. Biden's swearing-in at the Capitol and a "Field of Flags" public art display to symbolize the crowds typically gathered for the event in Washington, whose mayor has urged Americans not to travel to the city.

— *Michael Crowley*

With a week before his inauguration, Biden focuses on filling out his staff.

With just one week until he is inaugurated as the 46th president of the United States, President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. on Wednesday continued to fill out his senior staff, naming Samantha Power, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations during the Obama administration, to lead the United States Agency for International Development.

Mr. Biden also added the position to the National Security Council and elevated two White House posts that all but disappeared in the Trump administration: a homeland security adviser to manage matters as varied as extremism, pandemics and natural disasters, and the first deputy national security adviser for cyber and emerging technology.

During her tenure at the U.N., Ms. Power was involved in the international response to the Ebola outbreak. Before that, she worked on former President Barack Obama's National Security Council, advising the White House on human rights issues. In her new role, she will oversee the country's global efforts to help defeat the pandemic.

During the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, Ms. Power warned that other countries would look to the United States for how to respond to the crisis.

"If President Trump doesn't overcome his go-it-alone mind-set and take immediate steps to mobilize a global coalition to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, its spread will cause a catastrophic loss of life *and* make it impossible to restore normalcy in the United States in the foreseeable future," Ms. Power wrote in an April 7 opinion piece for The Times.

Here are other announcements coming from the Biden team with seven days to go until the his administration begins:

- The White House homeland security adviser will be **Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall**, according to transition officials. She is a longtime aide to Mr. Biden who served under Mr. Obama as senior director for Europe and then deputy secretary of energy, where she oversaw the modernization of the nuclear arsenal.
- Mr. Biden has carved out a role for **Anne Neuberger**, a rising official at the National Security Agency, to bolster cyber offense and defense. Ms. Neuberger ran the Russia Small Group, which mounted a pre-emptive strike on the Kremlin's cyber-actors during the 2018 midterm elections, part of an effort to counter Moscow after its interference in the 2016 presidential election.
- **Jeffrey Wexler** will head the Covid-19 operations, after working on virus preparedness during the campaign and transition.
- **John McCarthy**, the deputy national political director on the campaign, will be senior adviser to the counselor to the president, Steve Ricchetti.
- **Zayn Siddique**, the chief of staff for the domestic and economic transition team, and **Thomas Winslow**, the chief of staff to the campaign manager, will be senior advisers to the deputy chief of staff. (An earlier version of this item misspelled Zayn.)
- **Lisa Kohnke**, who runs the scheduling for the transition team, will become the director of presidential scheduling.
- **Sarah Feldmann** will be the chief of staff for the Office of Management and Administration. And **Christian Peele** will be the deputy director of management and administration for personnel.
- **Michael Leach**, a former senior manager of labor relations for the N.F.L. Management Council and assistant to the head coach for the Chicago Bears, will be the chief diversity and inclusion director. (An earlier version of this item inaccurately said that Mr. Leach also coached Texas Tech football, but that coach was a different man with the same name.)

— *Eileen Sullivan and David E. Sanger*

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The Pentagon will arm National Guard troops deploying to the Capitol for the inauguration.

National Guard troops who are flooding into Washington to secure the Capitol for Inauguration Day will be armed, the Army secretary, Ryan McCarthy, has decided, Defense Department officials said Tuesday.

The armed troops will be responsible for security around the Capitol building complex, the officials said.

As up to 20,000 troops continued to arrive in Washington from all over the country, Defense Department officials had been weighing whether to deploy them with arms. Mr. McCarthy has decided that at the very least those around the Capitol building will carry weapons, said the officials, who confirmed the decision on the condition of anonymity.

Mr. McCarthy's decision came after a meeting with Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Democrat of California. Ms. Pelosi, according to congressional staff members, demanded that the Pentagon take a more muscular posture after a mob, egged on by President Trump last week, breached the Capitol.

Pentagon officials say they are deeply worried about protests that are planned for the inauguration of President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. next week. About 16 groups — some of them saying they will be armed and most of them made up of hard-line supporters of Mr. Trump — have registered to stage protests in Washington, officials said.

Mayor Muriel Bowser of Washington sent a letter to Mr. Trump on Sunday asking for an emergency declaration to obtain additional funding for inauguration security.

"In light of the attack on the Capitol and intelligence suggesting further violence is likely during the inaugural period, my administration has re-evaluated our preparedness posture for the inauguration, including requesting the extension of D.C. National Guard support through Jan. 24, 2021," Ms. Bowser wrote.

Defense Department officials said that the White House had signed off on the decision to arm some of the National Guard troops coming to Washington to provide security. Pentagon officials have underscored that the National Guard — not active-duty military troops — will be assigned to those duties.

— *Helene Cooper and Adam Goldman*

Senator Ben Sasse On Impeachment and Transition, the GOP in Minority

hughhewitt.com/senator-ben-sasse-on-impeachment-and-transition-the-gop-in-minority/

January 8, 2021

Senator Ben Sasse (R-NE) joined me this morning:

Transcript:

HH: I'm joined now by Senator Sasse. Good morning, Senator.

BS: Good morning, Hugh.

HH: What is your assessment of the President's intention and his culpability for the insurrectionists and the rioters breaking into the Capitol and murdering a Capitol Policeman?

BS: Well, the people's Capitol, which is obviously the greatest symbol around the world of freedom and liberty and self-government, there's polling all over the world that the dome of the Capitol is literally the most identifiable symbol of freedom, and it was ransacked by a mob that was incited by the President of the United States. While blood was actually being shed in the Capitol, and I was in the Senate chamber, and the Secret Service was trying to rush the Vice President to safety, at those exact moments, the President is rage tweeting against the Vice President. Why? Because Mike, because Vice President Pence had the audacity to fulfill his oath of office to the Constitution. It's a big deal. Lies have consequences.

HH: Now I am curious about the word incite. It has a legal meaning. I know you're not a lawyer, but incite means to act with the purposeful intention to cause. That's why I asked you the question I did. Do you think he intended the mob to break into the Congress?

BS: You are right that I am not a lawyer, so there probably are 15 sub-definitions of incite. But the President had a rally hours before this happened where he is telling them to go to the Capitol and to go wild. This is a part of a pattern. The guy is addicted to division. This is a deep brokenness in his soul. You and I have talked about it multiple times. Donald Trump is a guy who hurts. And I hurt for him at an anthropological and a human level, but at a level of his oath of office to the Constitution, the duty of the president of the United States is to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution. And the President is addicted to social media and to television, and to division, and he's been lying to the American people for eight straight weeks and planned it long before. No matter what was happening in any state, he was going to say the election was being stolen, and the people needed to rise up.

HH: So Senator...

BS: But Wednesday morning, he said repeatedly to go wild when you get to the Capitol. And they went to the Capitol, and well, let's be clearly, Hugh, there are 30,000 people here. The vast majority of them are honorable, freedom-loving people. The vast majority of them, but not all of them.

HH: Do you, I've got to land the plane, though, Senator. Do you think he intended for the riot and the occupation, the insurrection to happen?

BS: I think Donald Trump wanted there to be massive divisions, and he was telling people there was a path by which he was going to stay in office after January 20th. That was never true. And he wanted chaos on television. I don't have any idea what was in his heart about what he wanted to happen once they were in the Capitol, but he wanted there to be chaos, and I'm sure you've also had conversations with other senior White House officials, as I have.

HH: I have.

BS: As this was unfolding on television, Donald Trump was walking around the White House confused about why other people on his team weren't as excited as he was as you had rioters pushing against Capitol Police trying to get into the building.

HH: That said...

BS: That was happening. He was delighted.

HH: That's it. Should he be impeached and removed?

BS: I think that there are a lot of questions that we need to get to the bottom of about why the National Guard was not deployed, why was it delayed. So that's what I've been working on last night and this morning. I want to understand more about why the National Guard wasn't deployed when there had been clear calls for it, and then why that delay happened. So there are more things that I need to understand before I get to a conclusory judgment about that. But I think that the question of was the President derelict in his duty, that's not an open question. He was.

HH: Now you know that the history of the Roman Revolution from 60BC to Augustus Caesar is a progressive cycle of iterations away from the norm. A rushed impeachment would be yet another iteration away from the norm. Would that not itself be terribly damaging?

BS: So I think you raise a really good point, and it's why I think there's a distinction between the objective question of was the President derelict, and the prudential judgment of what is the best way to take America forward. Donald Trump's not going to be in office in 13, 14 days, whenever the right count is. I don't care much, again, at a human level. You know, I've built a relationship with the President as we had to work together over the last four years. And I'm sad for much of who Donald Trump is. But I don't really care at the level of American

Constitutional health where Donald Trump is in 2023. I do care a lot about where the American people are. And there are many, many, many great Americans who voted for Donald Trump, because they didn't like the alternatives. They didn't like Hillary Clinton in 2016. They didn't like the failure of so many, not all, but so man in the Democratic Party to push back against AOC's agenda to drive the Democratic Party farther to the left. So I understand, I didn't vote for Donald Trump, but I understand why lots of people did in my state and across the country. And what I want us to be doing is moving forward with 85, 90, and 95% of the people wanting to reaffirm a Constitutional system of checks and balances where you don't have the Article II leader trying to incite action against the Article I branch and the people's House. So I am with you that the prudential questions about what's good for the American people in 2023 and 2033. Those should be the most important questions right now.

HH: Do you want members of the Cabinet to resign in protest? And if so, who?

BS: I would say that I've had conversations for four years straight with members of the Cabinet who see behavior that they regard as not just morally disgusting, though that, but just totally confusing about an adult who supposed to be shepherding this great gift that we've inherited as the Constitutional system, that we pass it onto our kids. And many people have asked my advice over three and a half years about whether or not they should stay or resign. Typically, my advice has been to stay, that the administration has done many, many wonderful things. You and I have talked about it. Some of the things that Mike Pompeo has been doing over the course of the last couple of years, really exceptionally good work. And so there are a number of members of the Cabinet who have done work at the level of policy implementation. And there have been a lot of people from the senior White House staff and in the Cabinet who have also done very good work in restraining some moments when Donald Trump was inclined to do some really crazy stuff. And so in general, I've urged people to stay and to try to do the best they can. You're not serving the man, you're serving the American people by serving that office. Right now, I have a couple of other conversations going, so I don't want to discuss those in this context, but in general, my advice has been to people to stay and serve the American people through their callings and in that office. Again, when you work, when you take an oath of office as a Cabinet official, you're taking the oath not to a man. The crap we saw at the Capitol where a United States flag at one point came down and a Trump flag went up instead, that's not what people are taking an oath to. They're taking an oath to the flag of the United States that people for 240 years have bled and died to protect. And when they take that oath and serve in the Article II branch, they're doing it under the authority of the person who's the chief executive, the presider, which is what the word, as you know, president is supposed to mean. It's not supposed to be a kingly title. They're not doing it to a man. They're doing it to the American people and the office. And so in general, I think the right choice is for people to serve as stability.

HH: So that's the Cabinet. There are three key staff members – the chief of staff, the White House Counsel, and the National Security Advisor. Do you want those three to stay and serve through the transition?

BS: I think all three of those, I can't remember if you said White House Counsel or not...

HH: I did.

BS: But I would add him to your list. Okay. I think all of those, the American people would be best served by them staying in their offices.

HH: Ronna McDaniel is likely to be elected unopposed to a third term of the RNC today. She's a Trump selection. Do they need a new chair? Tommy Hicks, by the way, is co-chair, running for reelection, but he has challengers. What is your advice to the Republican National Committee about both of those offices?

BS: The Republican National Committee is not a healthy organization. As you know, in the 2016 campaign, I campaigned for almost everybody not named Donald Trump. And it became pretty clear that the RNC as a structure was, you know, akin to a fueled up 747 sitting on a runway that could be hijacked by almost anybody with a big brand. And that's what happened. And I've made it pretty clear that I think it's pretty dangerous for the party of Lincoln and Reagan to become a party of, you know, a lot of QAnon nonsense and a lot of TV obsession and a lot of narcissistic trolling. Our party needs to be bigger than one personality, and I hope that the Republican National Committee is thinking hard about how we serve our kids by trying to put forward an argument that can speak to 70%, and frankly that could speak to 90% of America. And right now, we don't do that. I mean, you saw that in Georgia.

HH: So do you want a clean sweep? Do you want a clean sweep of the RNC?

BS: You know, the RNC doesn't ask my advice on how they govern the place. There is a lot of yes man and yes womanism inside the RNC. It's not a place that's primarily about ideas right now. It's been a cult of personality for some time, and they don't ask my advice. So I'm not going to comment on a specific election there, but I think the RNC needs to have lots and lots of change. We need to be making a case why we want to be the party of gratitude, not the party of grievance. You know, America isn't a tribal war forever. And if you listen to most of the crap that comes out of the RNC, these are a bunch of people obsessed with whatever some random Democrat said that day, and they want to scream about it.

HH: If I can, Senator, I want to move to the other end of the spectrum.

BS: Sure.

HH: Steve Schmidt, who is the leader of the Lincoln Project, has planned a brutal campaign against companies, trade associations, CEOs that serve as financiers of the authoritarian movement that attacked the U.S. Capitol. It's a time for choosing. It's America or autocracy. There's going to be a public discussion about it, of course, Steve Schmidt of the McCain campaign who selected Sarah Palin to be his vice president. What do you make of the Lincoln Project's sort of anti-Trumpism? Is it opportunism? Or is it principle?

BS: I think there's an insane amount of money that's been made by people laundering Republican or formerly Republican brands to raise money from Democrats and for Democratic causes. So I don't spend a lot of time on the Lincoln Project, but I think a lot of the work they've done is very, very sad, very destructive. But again, I think the more important thing than me complaining about the Lincoln Project is talking about the party of Lincoln and who we want to be. America doesn't work if we're going to hate each other. America can't do big things if we just talk about how much we hate each other. I'm the third or fourth most conservative member of the Senate by policy, by voting record. But I'm just not that partisan, because I care more about my neighbors than I care about people in D.C. who live on social media to attack the other party. It's not very many of Americans who really care about that crap.

HH: People think it was a cliché when I quoted Lincoln. We must not be enemies, we must be friends, we must not be enemies.

BS: Amen.

HH: But it's not cliché.

BS: It's not cliché. People call me naïve for saying I'm still optimistic about America. Fine, call me naïve. Politics has enough cynics. At the end of this rot, we've got to love our neighbor. I mean, the point of America is about coming together to affirm a Constitutional system. Why? Is the Constitution the end? No. The Constitution is a means. It's Washington's silver frame to get to the golden apple at the middle, which is the communities where we work and where we raise kids and where we worship and where we love.

HH: Which is freedom.

BS: Which is where you build freedom from so that freedom, too, government gets this freedom from. Government isn't the end. Government gets its freedom from so we can get to freedom to actually build crap with the people God has called us to live next to, and next door to, and to break bread with.

HH: So I have to close, though, Senator, by asking you about this cycle which began in 2016 with cable's wall to wall coverage of the President, and with James Comey and Andrew McCabe's decision to investigate the President without telling me. It proceeded through Mr.

Mueller and the Steele dossier. It's proceeded through a faux impeachment, now being debated a real impeachment. And TDS enraged pundits on various cable channels talking with complete Trump apologists on various cable channels. There is a lot to go around here.

BS: Yeah.

HH: What is your assessment of everything?

BS: So all that you said is true, Hugh. I agree with all of it, and yet we should also recognize that the amount of, the number of Americans that are paying attention to the stories that are on cable every day, less than 14%. Less than 14% of the American people are watching politics on a daily basis. 86% of our neighbors say I don't want that crap to be the center of my consciousness. Politics is not meant to be constant horse race substitutes for sports, for the Buckeyes and the Indians and the Browns. I mean, the reality is the places where people live should, they should do their work by being an engaged citizen for 10-30 minutes a day so they can get back to coaching Little League. Like you're right. The rage crap of lots of MSNBC, the sort of capitulation of the New York Times editorial page to the progressive woke mob, it's really gross. But at the end of the day, MSNBC has like, what, 1.8 million viewers? It's like half a percent of America. I mean, you're saying something that's true, but we have to be for something before we're just against all that crap. And right now under Donald Trump, my party hasn't been for very much. It's just been against.

HH: My very last question, Senator. I heard from a lot of callers yesterday. They want to do whataboutism. But that's really an appeal for one standards, not double standards. And every time a double standard is employed, they lose faith in the people employing it. What is your comment to them about one rule, the rule of law?

BS: Great point. So we should be against violence no matter who's bringing it about. The truth of the matter is the state, the one thing that it's really fundamentally supposed to do is have a monopoly on violence in the public square, to maintain order so Americans can fight out their differences with debates and with persuasion and with entrepreneurship. And so when you think, when we're angry because somebody is employing a double standard on the other side, the answer by us cannot be to say yeah, well since they did it, we're also going to have a double standard. It should be to reaffirm the standard, apply it to ourselves and apply it to the other side. But if you believe in a principle, advance the principle. Your principle doesn't collapse just because somebody on the other side is unprincipled.

HH: That is well said. And Senator, I thank you for your times this morning. Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska, come back often.

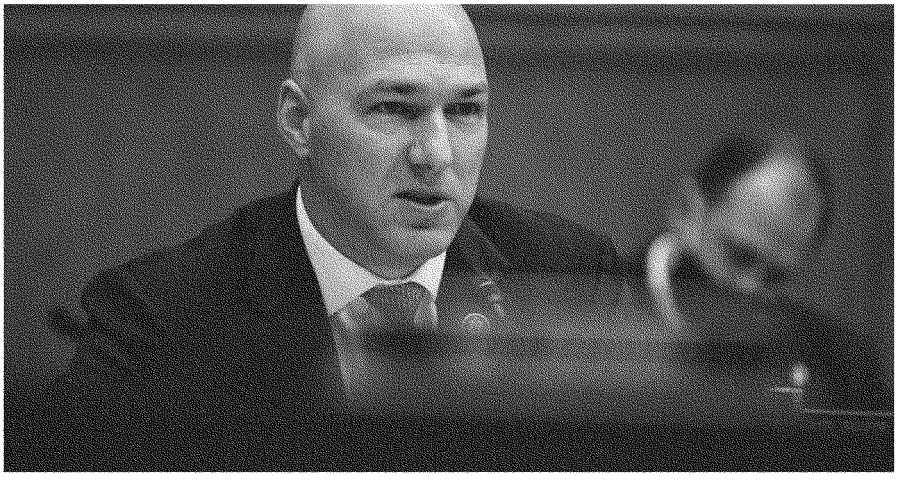
BS: Thanks, Hugh.

End of interview.

Representative from Northeast Ohio one of the few Republicans to vote to impeach Trump

news5cleveland.com/news/chaos-in-the-capitol/republican-representative-from-northeast-ohio-one-of-the-few-to-vote-to-impeach-trump

By: Ian Cross January 13, 2021



WASHINGTON — Representative Anthony Gonzalez, who represents Northeast Ohio's 16th District, joined nine other Republican colleagues and all voting Democrats in the House of Representatives to vote to impeach President Donald Trump on Wednesday.

Gonzalez released this statement moments before the impeachment vote:

Like many of those around our district, I have spent the past few days trying to make sense of everything that unfolded at the Capitol on January 6th. In rehashing the day as I experienced it, consulting with law enforcement, and watching footage of the events before and during the attack, I have come to the following conclusion.

The President of the United States helped organize and incite a mob that attacked the United States Congress in an attempt to prevent us from completing our solemn duties as prescribed by the Constitution. In doing so, five people have died - including a Capitol Police Officer - many more have been injured, and our democracy has been shaken. The Vice President and both chambers of Congress had their lives put in grave danger as a result of the President's actions in the events leading up to and on January 6th. During the

attack itself, the President abandoned his post while many members asked for help, thus further endangering all present. These are fundamental threats not just to people's lives but to the very foundation of our Republic.

When I consider the full scope of events leading up to January 6th including the President's lack of response as the United States Capitol was under attack, I am compelled to support impeachment.

Trump's impeachment in the House was a foregone conclusion, with Democrats signaling earlier this week they had enough votes to reach the simple majority needed to impeach the president on a single article: incitement of insurrection.

Following hours of debate Wednesday, the House voted Wednesday afternoon, making Trump the first president in U.S. history to be impeached twice. The process will move to the Senate for a trial.

Current Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has rejected calling an emergency session of the chamber, making it all but certain that a potential impeachment trial for President Donald Trump won't take place until president-elect Joe Biden is inaugurated.

RELATED: McConnell delays start of impeachment trial, says he isn't sure how he'll vote

A Qualified Defense of Impeaching Trump Again

reason.com/volokh/2021/01/06/a-qualified-defense-of-impeaching-trump/

January 7, 2021





In the hours since the awful riot by Trump supporters at the Capitol today, many have called for Trump to be impeached for a second time, due to his role in inciting the riot. In addition to numerous Democrats, advocates include prominent conservatives such as David French, John Podhoretz (who harshly criticized the earlier effort to impeach Trump, and leading legal scholars, such as my co-bloggers Keith Whittington, and (in a joint post) Will Baude, Sam Bray, and Steve Sachs. By the time you read this, there are likely to be more supporters of a second impeachment, perhaps many more.

I myself supported the earlier impeachment of Trump over the Ukraine scandal, and also believe he deserved to be impeached for other lawbreaking and abuses of power, such as his cruel child separation policy. I think today's events provide additional grounds for impeachment and removal, for many of the same reasons French, Whittington, and other advocates have pointed out. Unlike in the Ukraine case (where Trump violated a federal

criminal law, as well as abused his powers), or in the child separation case (a policy courts ruled to be illegal), it is not clear to me that Trump has broken the law in this instance, though I admit I could be missing something on that point.

But even if Trump hasn't broken the law, he has abused the powers of his office by falsely claiming that the election was stolen from him, and repeatedly inciting violence by his supporters. David French summarizes the issue well:

> Donald Trump sowed the seeds for the riot of January 6th from the moment he entered the race in 2015, when he made it plain that he welcomed violence to silence protesters at his rallies, when he broadcast that any election defeat – even then – would not be legitimate. He kept sowing when he refused to promise that he'd support the peaceful transition of power. He sowed the seeds when he famously told the Proud Boys – a far-right street militia – to "stand back and stand by." And he sowed still more when he raged, day by day, that he'd suffered a great injustice on November 3rd.
>
> And now, as the nation's capital reaps what he sowed, he can't stop stoking the flames. In a video message ostensibly designed to quell the violence, he repeated his election lies. And he told members of the insurrection, "I know how you feel." He told the rioters, "We love you."
>
> Yes, Donald Trump loves his violent mob.

For reasons well-summarized by Keith Whittington and prominent conservative legal scholar Michael Stokes Paulsen, among others, impeachment can be justified even in cases of abuse of power where no specific law has been violated. I have previously defended such impeachments for noncriminal abuses of power against claims that they would create a dangerous slippery slope (see here and here). Everything I said then still applies.

If Trump is impeached again, I will be happy to support the effort and to advocate conviction. If Trump is convicted, I hope the Senate will not only remove him from office, but impose the additional penalty, provided for in the Constitution, of "disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States." That would prevent Trump from returning to the White House in 2024, or at any future time.

But before going down this road, advocates should consider whether it is likely to succeed. A second impeachment, followed by a second acquittal, could potentially benefit Trump as much or more than it hurts him. He and his supporters could point to the acquittal as a vindication.

Obviously, a second impeachment would be a stain on his reputation, even if he avoid conviction. But it's not clear that two acquittals would really be much more of a stain than "only" one. It's still possible that a second impeachment would be worth the risk. Even if Trump gets acquitted, he could take some real damage if a large number of GOP senators vote to convict (unlike last time, when Mitt Romney was alone in his party for doing so). If there is substantial GOP support for a second impeachment, I say "full steam ahead!"

But if not, we should at least carefully consider whether this approach is worth it or not. The main goals of impeachment are to remove a dangerous president from office, impose a political price for abuses of power, and deter future misconduct of the same type. These goals are only achievable if the target is either convicted or at least suffers damage to his reputation and political standing. If he gets acquitted, and his standing remains intact —or, worse still, actually improves—the impeachment has to be considered a failure.

Admittedly, an otherwise unsuccessful impeachment effort might eventually be vindicated in the eyes of history. As I wrote a year ago, it is still not clear what the ultimate impact of Trump's first impeachment will be. But a well-thought out impeachment effort should also seek to achieve beneficial short and medium-term goals. At the very least, it should avoid creating harmful effects that might actually benefit its target and his allies.

In sum, I believe there are ample legal and moral grounds for impeaching and convicting Trump, and for barring him from holding any federal office in the future. But advocates of a second impeachment should carefully consider the potential political effects before proceeding.

UPDATE: I should note that today's events also strengthen the case for potentially using the Twenty-Fifth Amendment to remove Trump from office and for prosecuting him after he leaves. I will leave the former to those with greater relevant expertise. I hope to address the latter in a future post, if I decide I have something useful to contribute to the debate.

The First Amendment Doesn't Protect Trump Against Impeachment for his Role in Inciting the Assault on the Capitol

reason.com/volokh/2021/01/08/the-first-amendment-doesnt-protect-trump-against-impeachment-for-his-role-in-inciting-the-assault-on-the-capitol/

January 8, 2021



In an interesting recent post, co-blogger Josh Blackman and Seth Barrett Tillman argue that President Trump cannot be impeached and convicted for his role in inciting the riot at the Capitol because he was engaging in First Amendment-protected speech. Their argument is clever, but fundamentally wrong. And for a very simple reason: the First Amendment doesn't protect high-ranking government officials from being removed from office because of their speech.



For present purposes, I assume Blackman and Tillman are right to conclude that Trump's speech is the sort protected under the current First Amendment doctrine, and that it would be unconstitutional to impose criminal or civil penalties on him for it. I actually think they

may well be right on that point. But it is irrelevant in a context where the relevant penalty is removal from a high position of government power—and possible exclusion from future office-holding.

Under current Supreme Court precedent, lower-level non-policymaking government employees have at least some significant protection against being being fired because of their views or their political speech. But the Court has also made clear, in various rulings, that higher-level policymaking employees whose political views are relevant to the performance of their duties enjoy no such protection. Indeed, high-ranking government officials get fired because of their political speech all the time. Donald Trump himself has fired numerous cabinet officials and other subordinates because they expressed views he didn't like (Secretary of Defense Mark Esper was a notable recent example).

The exact dividing line between a policymaking employee whose views are relevant to his or her job and a lower-level official who enjoys First Amendment protection against firing is hard to specify. But it's pretty obvious that the president falls on the former side of the divide. If anyone is a high-level government with enormous policymaking discretion whose views are relevant to job performance, it is the president of the United States!

If First Amendment-protected speech could never be grounds for impeachment and removal of the president, it would lead to absurd and dangerous results. Consider a scenario like the following:

> The President of the United States makes a speech in which he he avows his desire to "do everything I legally can to promote fascism." He then exhorts his supporters (who are known to include violent elements) to "fight like Hell to establish Fascism, and if you don't fight like Hell, you're not going to have a country anymore." In the aftermath of that speech, neo-Nazi and white supremacist supporters of the president attack a government building, with numerous resulting injuries and loss of life.

Everything in the above hypothetical speech is protected by the First Amendment. It is actually very similar to Trump's speech just before the recent riot, quoted by Blackman and Tillman (I have deliberately adapted some of Trump's language). The only significant difference is the addition of the references to fascism. And that difference doesn't matter for First Amendment purposes. Indeed, *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, the classic 1969 case cited by Blackman and Tillman, involved inflammatory remarks by a neo-Nazi KKK leader. A fascist or a Klansman cannot be fined or imprisoned for expressing his awful political views, nor could he be discriminated against in the provision of government benefits, such as welfare payments or educational loans.

Nonetheless, Congress would have good reason to impeach and remove a president who actively advocated and promoted fascism, incited fascist violence, and otherwise sought to replace our constitutional system with a fascist one. And that would be true even if the

speech involved was of the kind generally protected by the First Amendment and his actions did not violate the letter of federal law.

Using the powers of the presidency to promote fascism —even legal powers—would be an abuse of power, and a menace to the constitutional order. The same goes for using the "bully pulpit" of the presidency for the same purpose, especially if it resulted in foreseeable violence.

What is true of presidential promotion of fascism is also true of Trump's repeated justifications and promotion of violence by his supporters, going all the way back to the 2016 campaign. All or most of it may well be protected against criminal and civil sanctions by the First Amendment. But it is still an abuse of the power of the presidency, and still grounds for impeachment and removal.

The same reasoning applies to Trump's recent effort to pressure the Georgia Secretary of State into fraudulently altering the vote count in his state, the other potential ground for impeachment currently under consideration by House Democrats [see Update #2 below]. Trump's actions in that instance may have violated federal and state law. But if not, his statements there were protected by the First Amendment, in the sense that he could not be subject to criminal or civil sanctions. Even so, pressuring government officials to engage in election fraud is an abuse of presidential power worthy of impeachment.

The obvious response to this argument is that it might lead to a slippery slope where Congress might impeach and remove presidents merely for expressing views they disapprove of. My critique of Josh Blackman's similar slippery slope argument against the first impeachment of Trump applies here as well:

> Every president has partisan adversaries who who would be happy to "get him" if they can. Nonetheless, slippery slope fears about impeachment are misplaced. If anything, there is much more reason to fear that presidents who richly deserve to be removed will get away with serious abuses of power.
>
> The biggest reason why we need not worry much about frivolous impeachment and removal is that removal requires a two-thirds supermajority in the Senate, as well as a majority in the House of Representatives to impeach. The former is almost always impossible to achieve unless many senators from the president's own party vote to convict him. They are highly unlikely to do so for frivolous reasons. [Prominent conservative legal scholar] Michael Paulsen expounds on this and some other constraints on abusive impeachment in greater detail here....
>
> Ultimately, the real danger we face is not that too many good presidents will be removed from power unfairly, but that too many grave abuses of power will go unpunished and undeterred. I am not optimistic that impeachment alone can solve this problem. The supermajority requirement that prevents frivolous impeachment also prevents it in all too many cases where it is amply justified. But the threat of impeachment for abuse of power can at least help at the margin.
>
> Let presidents—even "good" ones—lose more sleep over the possibility of impeachment. The rest of us will then be able to sleep a little easier, knowing we are that much more secure against abuses of government power.

I made additional relevant points in this post, where I explained why the occasional potentially unfair impeachment and removal of a "normal" president is a price well-worth paying in order to get rid of dangerous menaces like Trump—and deter future presidents from imitating them.

The First Amendment issue isn't the only possible objection to impeaching Trump. I myself have noted that there might be valid prudential reasons to forego a second impeachment if it looks like it might actually redound to Trump's benefit.

I will likely have more to say about the other issues involved in this impeachment effort in future posts. In this one, I just wanted to address Blackman and Tillman's First Amendment theory.

UPDATE: I wrote this post before seeing Jonathan Adler's insightful response to Blackman and Tillman, which makes similar points to mine. I would add that, I too agree that the president may be impeached for abuses of power that do not qualify as violations of specific criminal or civil laws. For helpful summaries of the relevant historical evidence on that point, see recent analyses by Gene Healy of the Cato Institute, Keith Whittington, and prominent conservative legal scholar Michael Stokes Paulsen (here, here, and here).

UPDATE #2: The draft Article of Impeachment currently being circulated by some House members combines Trump's role in the Capitol attack and his call to the Georgia Secretary of State into a single count.

UPDATE #3: In the original version of this post, I accidentally referred to former Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, as "Mike Esper." I apologize for the error, which I have corrected.

In pictures: Guns drawn as lawmakers scramble amid US Capitol breach

euronews.com/2021/01/07/in-pictures-guns-drawn-as-lawmakers-scramble-amid-us-capitol-breach



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USA

Comments

By **Euronews** • last updated: 07/01/2021



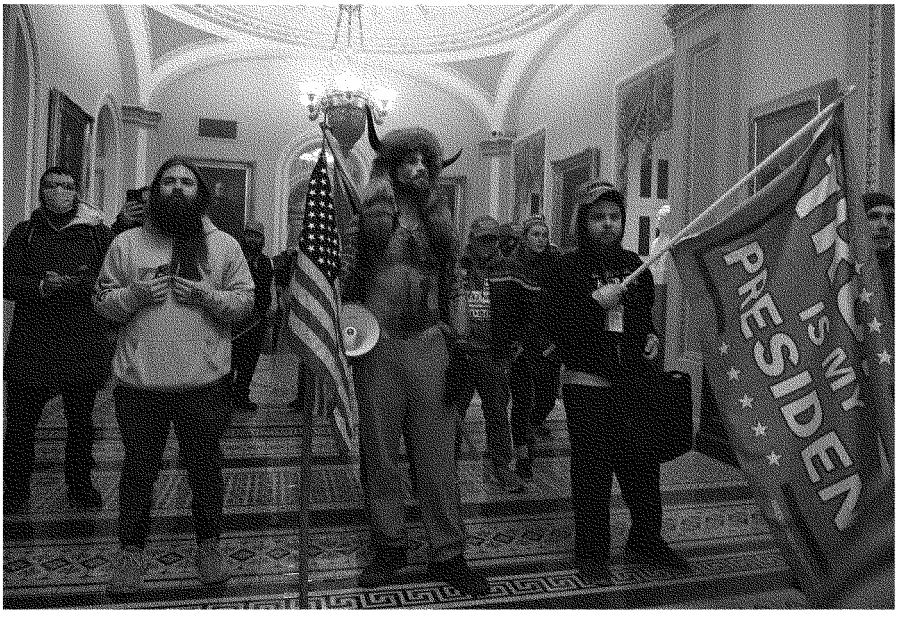
U.S. Capitol Police with guns drawn stand near a barricaded door as protesters try to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021. - Copyright AP Photo/Andrew Harnik

Text size Aa Aa

Pictures from inside the US Capitol revealed unprecedented scenes of guns drawn in the House of Representatives and hand-to-hand combat with police after protesters stormed the building.

The nation's elected representatives scrambled to crouch under desks and donned gas marks, while police tried to barricade the building in one of the most jarring scenes ever to unfold in a seat of American political power.

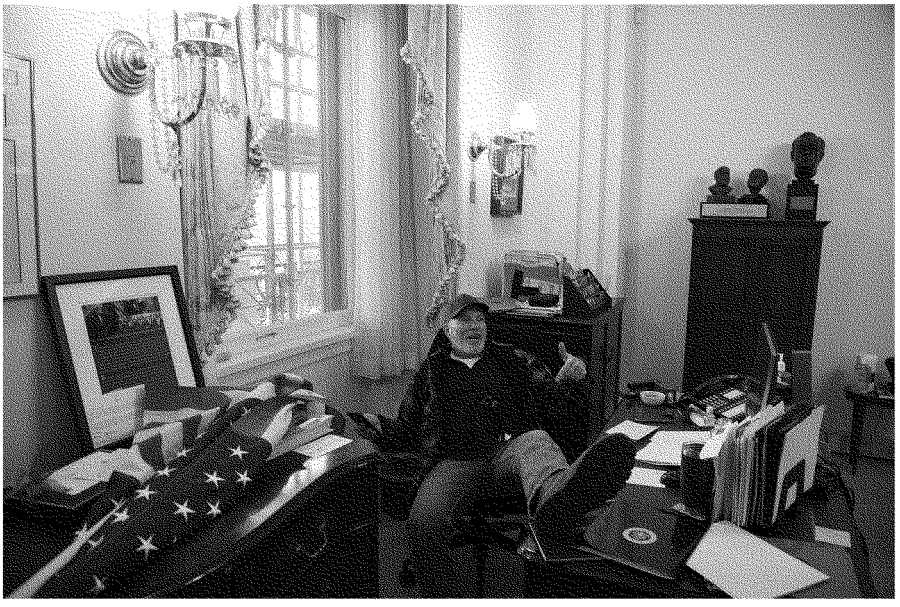
Here is a summary of what happened on Wednesday evening, in pictures.



12

Supporters of US President Donald Trump enter the US Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Saul Loeb/AFP



12

A supporter of US President Donald Trump sits inside the office of US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi as he protest inside the US Capitol in Washington, DC, January 6, 2021

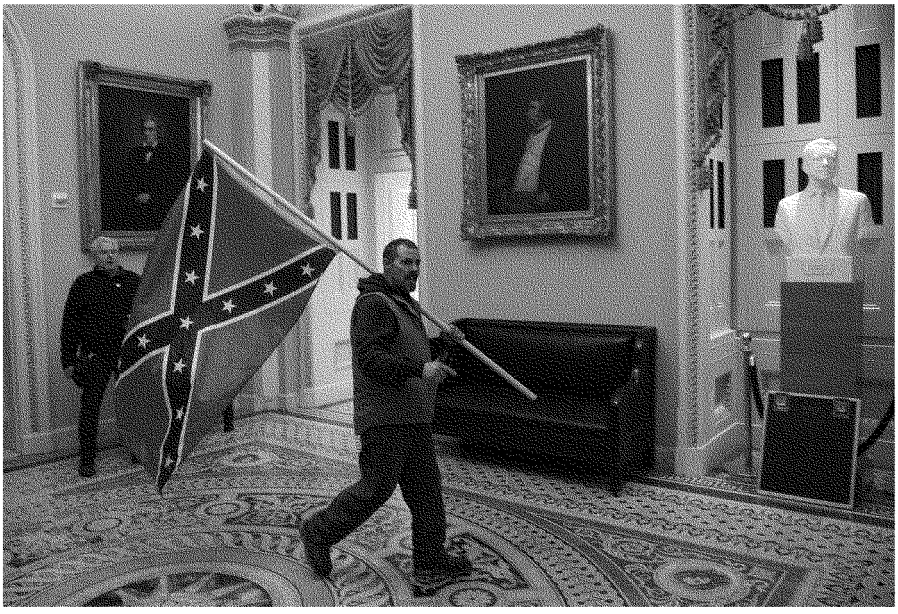
SAUL LOEB/AFP



12

Supporters of US President Donald Trump enter the US Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

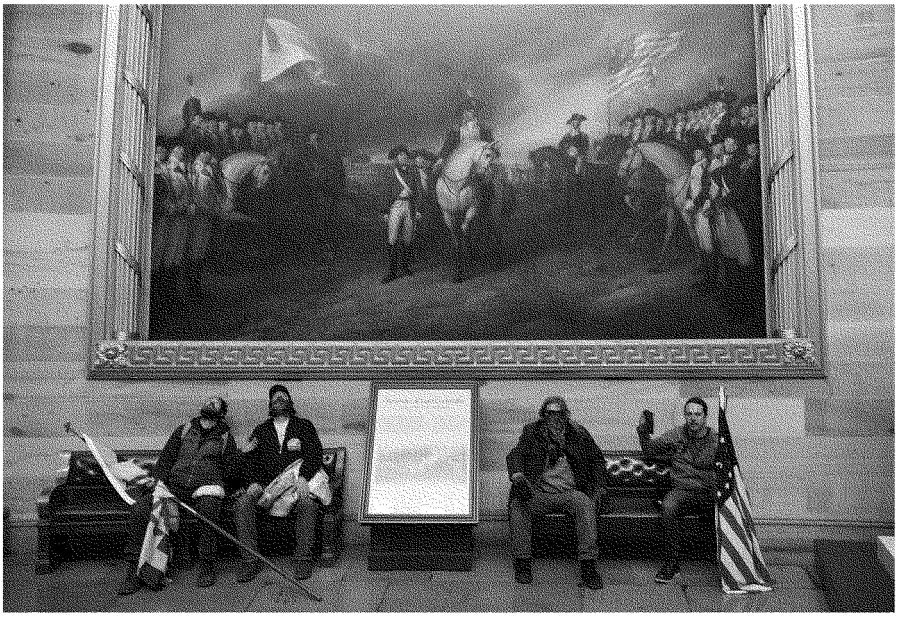
Saul Loeb/AFP



12

A supporter of US President Donald Trump enter the US Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Saul Loeb/AFP



12

Supporters of US President Donald Trump enter the US Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Saul Loeb/AFP



12

A person on a stretcher is placed in an ambulance outside the U.S. Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

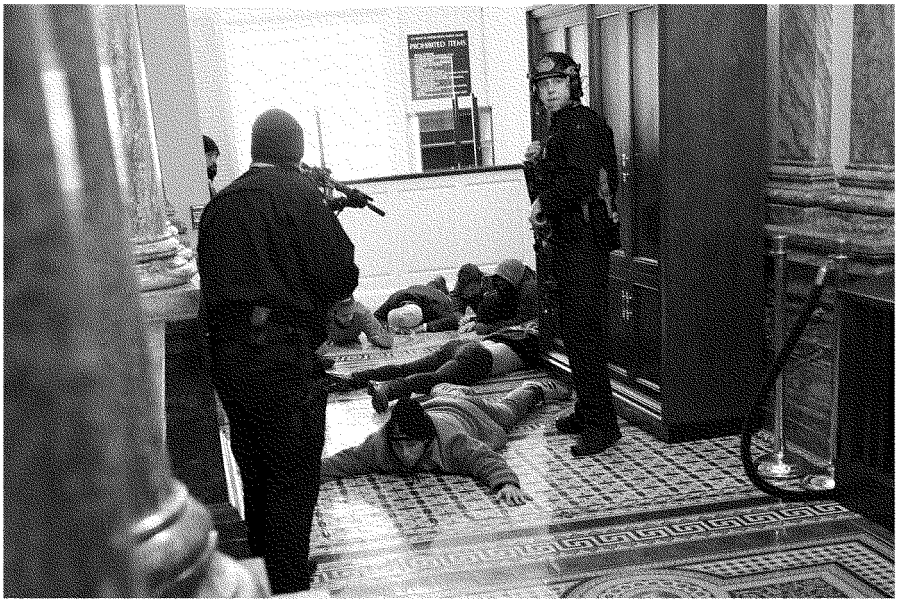
Jacquelyn Martin/AP Photo



12

U.S. Capitol Police with guns drawn stand near a barricaded door as protesters try to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol, Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Andrew Harnik/AP Photo



12

U.S. Capitol Police hold protesters at gun-point near the House Chamber inside the U.S. Capitol in Washington. January 6, 2021

Andrew Harnik/AP Photo



12

Trump supporters in front of U.S. Capitol Police in the hallway outside of the Senate chamber at the Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Manuel Balce Ceneta/AP Photo



12

People shelter in the House gallery as protesters were about to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol, Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Andrew Harnik/AP Photo



12

Lawmakers evacuate the floor as protesters were about to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol in Washington. January 6, 2021

J. Scott Applewhite/AP Photo



12

People shelter in the House gallery as protesters were about to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Andrew Harnik/AP Photo



12

Supporters of President Donald Trump climb the west wall of the the U.S. Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Jose Luis Magana/AP Photo



12

Supporters of US President Donald Trump protest outside the US Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Alex Edelman/AFP



12

A police officer has eyes flushed with water after a confrontation with demonstrators at the Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

John Minchillo/AP Photo



12

Trump supporters try to break through a police barrier at the Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

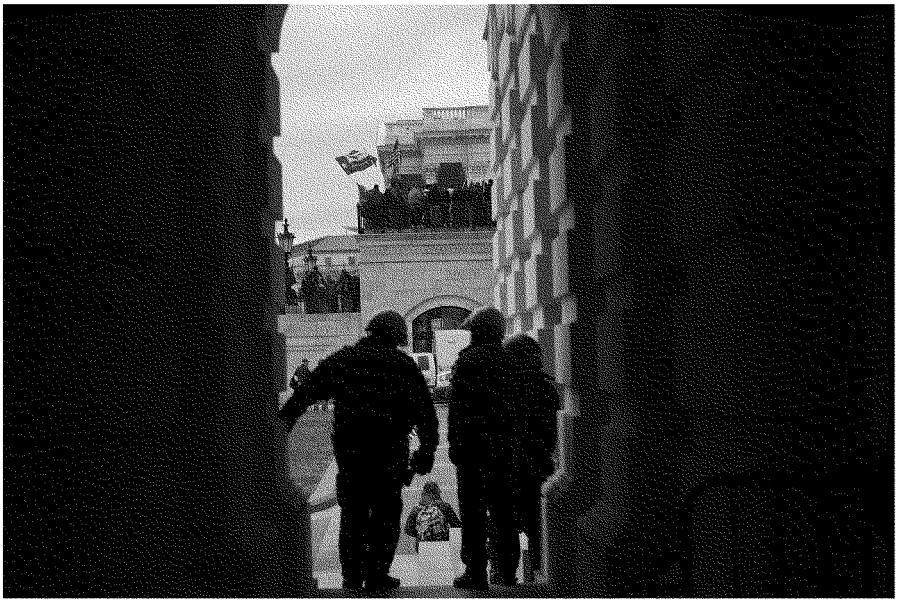
Julio Cortez/AP Photo



12

A demonstrator has his eyes flushed with water after confronting police at the Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Julio Cortez/AP Photo



12

Trump supporters gather outside the Capitol in Washington, USA, as Congress prepares to affirm President-elect Joe Biden's victory. January 6, 2021

Manuel Balce Ceneta/AP Photo



12

Trump supporters gather outside the Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

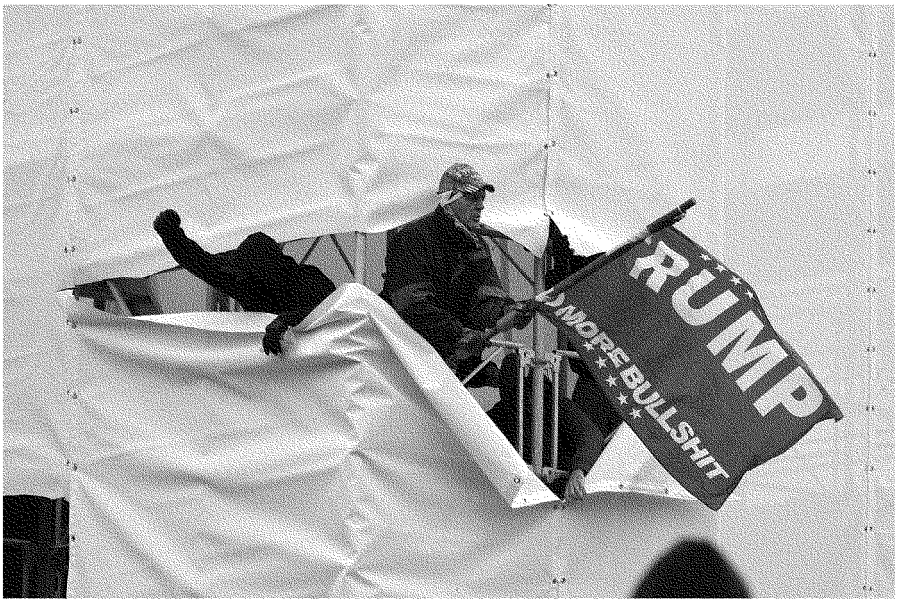
Manuel Balce Ceneta/AP Photo



12

Police hold off Trump supporters who tried to break through a police barrier at the Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Julio Cortez/AP Photo



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Trump supporters are seen outside the Capitol in Washington, USA. January 6, 2021

Jose Luis Magana/AP Photo

Donald Trump Interview Transcript With Jonathan Swan of Axios on HBO

rev.com/blog/transcripts/donald-trump-interview-transcript-with-axios-on-hbo



Jonathan Swan: (00:52)
Thank you so much for having us. We're over here, Mr. President. Thank you. Kelly.

President Donald J. Trump: (01:07)
Okay.

Jonathan Swan: (01:09)
Mr. President, thank you for joining us.

President Donald J. Trump: (01:10)
Thank you very much.

Jonathan Swan: (01:11)
We appreciate you taking the time, and we appreciate your commitment to answer our questions.

President Donald J. Trump: (01:16)
Sure.

Jonathan Swan: (01:16)
We really appreciate that. Over the years, I've heard you talk about your adherence to a philosophy called positive thinking. Is this the mantra that if you believe something, if you visualize it, then it will happen?

President Donald J. Trump: (01:29)
To an extent. I also think in terms of the downside. I do. I've been given a lot of credit for positive thinking, but I also think about downside because only a fool doesn't.

Jonathan Swan: (01:40)
To what extent do you think that that positive thinking mindset is suitable to handling the worst pandemic that we've seen in a century?

President Donald J. Trump: (01:49)
I think you have to have a positive outlook. Otherwise, you would have nothing without a positive outlook. I think we've done an incredible job, between the ventilators and stopping very infected people from China coming in, meaning putting the ban on China, which frankly nobody wanted me to do, practically nobody because it was very early in January. Then putting the ban on Europe, not an easy thing to do. When you put a ban on Europe, that's a big thing. We would have probably lost hundreds of thousands of lives more had I not done that.

President Donald J. Trump: (02:18)
And all of the experts, every one of them, not one of them wanted to do it. They thought it was too severe. Three months later, they're all saying, I'm glad you did it.

Jonathan Swan: (02:27)
The criticism of you that is most prominent, is about the communication. It's the public health experts saying that it needs to be based in reality. And they're saying that the wishful thinking and the salesmanship is just not suitable in a time when the pandemic has killed 145,000 Americans. And I understand what you're saying, that people need to hear positive thinking, but for the past five months it's been, the virus is totally under control, and the cases have been going up and the deaths have been going up.

President Donald J. Trump: (02:59)
Look, look.

Jonathan Swan: (03:00)
But you've been saying it's under control.

President Donald J. Trump: (03:01)
Nobody knew what this thing was all about. This has never happened before. 1917, but it was a totally different, it was a flu in that case. Okay? But other than 1917, there's never been

anything like this. And by the way, if you watch the fake news on television, they don't even talk about it. But you know, there are 188 of the countries right now that are suffering, some proportionately far greater than we are. Okay? As bad as we are.

Jonathan Swan: (03:24)
Very few. [crosstalk 00:03:25]

President Donald J. Trump: (03:24)
Some proportionately greater than we are. Right now, right now, Spain is having a big spike. There are tremendous problems in the world. You look at Moscow, look at what's going on with Moscow. Look at Brazil, look at these countries what's going on. This was sent to us by China, one way or the other, and we're never going to forget it. Believe me, we're never going to forget it.

President Donald J. Trump: (03:46)
And we were beating China at every single point. We were beating them on trade, we were making progress like nobody's ever made progress. Before the pandemic, they had the worst year, Jonathan, that they've had in 67 years. You know that. With the tariffs and everything else I did, we would taking in billions of dollars. I was giving some of it to the farmers. The farmers were doing well because they were targeting the farmers, I was targeting China. We were doing good.

President Donald J. Trump: (04:14)
Then all of a sudden, the game changed, and I had to close it down. I closed down the greatest economy ever in history.

Jonathan Swan: (04:21)
I-

President Donald J. Trump: (04:21)
Well, wait. And then, I closed it down. And now we're opening it. And we saved, by the way, by closing it down, we saved millions of lives. If we would have gone to herd and we knew very little about the disease, if we would've gone herd, we would have lost millions of people, millions of people. One person's too much. We're at 140,000 people. One person is too much. We're at 140. We would have lost millions of people. And those people that really understand it, they really understand it. They said, it's incredible the job that we've done. And again, I bring it up, the ban-

Jonathan Swan: (04:58)
Who says that?

President Donald J. Trump: (05:00)
Banning China from coming in far earlier-

Jonathan Swan: (05:03)
But it was already in here.

President Donald J. Trump: (05:05)
What's that?

Jonathan Swan: (05:05)
It was already here. By the time you banned China, it came in through Europe.

President Donald J. Trump: (05:08)
Nobody knew the extent. Nobody knew how contagious it was. You know What? Maybe China knew.

Jonathan Swan: (05:12)
But the question is, Mr. President, by June we knew things were bad. And the last time I was with you was the day before your Tulsa rally in the Oval, and you were saying big, huge crowd, it was endorsed. These people, they listen to you.

President Donald J. Trump: (05:30)
By the way, [crosstalk 00:05:30] Excuse me, Jonathan, we had a 19,000 seat stadium and first of all, we had 12,000 people, not 6,000, which you reported and other people reported. But you couldn't even get in. It was like an armed camp.

Jonathan Swan: (05:40)
Why would you want it that?

President Donald J. Trump: (05:41)
Because they had 120 Black Lives Matter people there and Tulsa-

Jonathan Swan: (05:44)
I understand but why would you have wanted a huge crowd?

President Donald J. Trump: (05:45)
Excuse me, wait. And Tulsa, well, because that area was a very good area at the time. It was an area that was pretty much over. [crosstalk 00:05:55] After, after, a month later, it started going up. That's a month later, but Tulsa was a very good, Oklahoma was doing very well as a state. It was almost free. It spiked a month later, a month and a half, two months later. But it was a good area.

President Donald J. Trump: (06:09)
We had a tremendous crowd, we had tremendous response. It was like an armed camp. You couldn't even get through. You couldn't get anybody in. But we had 12,000 people. It was incorrectly reported. The other thing we had that nobody wants to talk about, so Fox broadcast it. It was the highest rating in the history of Fox television Saturday night. It was the highest rating.

Jonathan Swan: (06:33)
Mr. President-

President Donald J. Trump: (06:34)
Well, wait a minute. You're saying something. That speech was the highest rated speech in the history of Fox television on Saturday night. And nobody says that.

Jonathan Swan: (06:44)
I think you misunderstand me. I'm not criticizing your ability to draw a crowd. Are you kidding me? I've covered you for five years. You draw massive crowds. You get huge ratings. I'm asking about the public health

President Donald J. Trump: (06:52)
I'm just saying this. I'm just saying this. At the time... And I canceled another one. I had to cancel it and we were going to have a great crowd in New Hampshire, and I canceled it for the same reason.

Jonathan Swan: (06:58)
But here's the question. I've covered you for a long time. I've gone to your rallies. I've talked to your people. They love you. They listen to you. They listen to every word you say, they hang on your every word. They don't listen to me or the media or Fauci. They think we're fake news. They want to get their advice from you. And so, when they hear you say, everything's under control, don't worry about wearing masks. I mean, these are people, many of them are older people, Mr. President.

President Donald J. Trump: (07:19)
Well, what's your definition of control?

Jonathan Swan: (07:20)
It's giving them a false sense of security.

President Donald J. Trump: (07:21)
Yeah. Under the circumstances right now, I think it's under control. I'll tell you what-

Jonathan Swan: (07:25)
How? 1,000 Americans are dying a day.

President Donald J. Trump: (07:27)
They are dying. That's true. And it is what it is. But that doesn't mean we aren't doing everything we can. It's under control as much as you can control it. This is a horrible plague that beset us.

Jonathan Swan: (07:39)
You really think this is as much as we can control it? 1,000 deaths a day?

President Donald J. Trump: (07:43)
Well, I'll tell you, I'd like to know if somebody... First of all, we have done a great job. We've gotten the governors everything they needed, they didn't do their job. Many of them didn't and some of them did. Someday we'll sit down. We'll talk about the successful ones, the good ones. Look at that smile. The good ones and the bad. We had good and bad. And we had a lot in the middle, but we had some incredible governors. I could tell you right now who the great ones are and who the not so great ones are, but the governors do it. We gave them massive amounts of material.

Jonathan Swan: (08:11)
Mr. President, you changed your message this week, in terms of you canceled the Jacksonville convention, you said, "Wear a mask." You're saying that, "It's going to get worse before it gets better." It's not something you'd like to say, I know. And you said that. The big question-

President Donald J. Trump: (08:23)
By the way, not get worse like the original flow. You understand that.

Jonathan Swan: (08:27)
Well, I hope not. It's a 1,000-

President Donald J. Trump: (08:29)
But If you look, Arizona's going down. Texas is going down, and Florida is going down.

Jonathan Swan: (08:31)
If I could just finish my question. The question is, even some of your own aides wonder whether you would stick to that message until Election Day, whether in a week or two, you won't say, "Right, we've got to reopen again. We can't do this stuff anymore." That you'll get bored of talking about the virus and go back to that sort of cheerleading.

President Donald J. Trump: (08:52)
No, I'm not going to get bored. I never get bored of talking about this, it's too big a thing.

Jonathan Swan: (08:54)
So will you stick to that message?

President Donald J. Trump: (08:54)
And again, it should have been stopped by China, and it wasn't.

Jonathan Swan: (08:59)
But now it's here and you're the President.

President Donald J. Trump: (09:00)
We have it here.

Jonathan Swan: (09:01)
[inaudible 00:09:04].

President Donald J. Trump: (09:02)
No, I think I'm very consistent. No, this is a very serious thing. We have 140,000 people at this moment.

Jonathan Swan: (09:08)
More than that.

President Donald J. Trump: (09:09)
This is a very, very serious situation. And what you have to do, is handle it the best it can be handled. And again, I'm working with the governors. I got them tremendous amounts of equipment that they would have never gotten. Jonathan, they wouldn't have equipment now, if I didn't get.

Jonathan Swan: (09:25)
When can you commit, by what date, that every American will have access to the same day testing that you get here in the White House?

President Donald J. Trump: (09:34)
Well, we have great testing. We're doing and many other people do-

Jonathan Swan: (09:37)
By what date?

President Donald J. Trump: (09:39)
Let me explain the testing. We have tested more people than any other country, than all of Europe put together times two. We have tested more people than anybody ever thought of. India has 1.4 billion people. They've done 11 million tests. We've done 55, it'll be close to 60 million tests. And there are those that say, you can test too much. You do-

President Donald J. Trump: (10:03)
And there are those that say you can test too much. You do know that.

Jonathan Swan: (10:04)
Who says that?

President Donald J. Trump: (10:05)
Oh, just read the manuals, read the books.

Jonathan Swan: (10:08)
Manuals?

President Donald J. Trump: (10:08)
Read the books. Read the books.

Jonathan Swan: (10:10)
What books?

President Donald J. Trump: (10:11)
What testing does-

Jonathan Swan: (10:13)
Wait a minute. I'm sorry.

President Donald J. Trump: (10:14)
Let me explain. What testing does, it shows cases. It shows where there may be cases. Other countries test... you know when they test? They test when somebody is sick. That's when they test. And I'm not saying they're right or wrong. Nobody has done it like we've done it. We've gotten absolutely no credit for it. But we've come up with so many different tests. The only thing that we have now is some people have to wait longer than we'd like them to. We want it-

Jonathan Swan: (10:38)
That's a big problem.

President Donald J. Trump: (10:39)
We want point to point. We want to have a five minute to a 15 minute test.

Jonathan Swan: (10:44)
Right. When do you think-

President Donald J. Trump: (10:44)
And we have... and like many others-

Jonathan Swan: (10:46)
Every American-

President Donald J. Trump: (10:47)
And, from what I understand, we're close to 50% where it's point to point tests. We are making thousands of instruments, thousands of tests right now, tens of thousands that can be distributed to various parts of the country. But you have to understand. And we've even sent some of them to other countries where they had a big problem. Jonathan, almost 50%, in fact, I think the number might be over, is immediate testing. The other is tough. You take a test. You have to send it to a laboratory. Let's say that takes a day. Let's say it's a day.

Jonathan Swan: (11:19)
Right. It's difficult.

President Donald J. Trump: (11:20)
So, it's three, or four, or five days.

Jonathan Swan: (11:21)
I understand.

President Donald J. Trump: (11:21)
There is nothing you can do about that.

Jonathan Swan: (11:22)
But when do you think you will have it for everyone? What day?

President Donald J. Trump: (11:25)
I think that you will have that relatively soon. I mean-

Jonathan Swan: (11:27)
What does that mean?

President Donald J. Trump: (11:28)
You already have half.

Jonathan Swan: (11:29)
Yeah.

President Donald J. Trump: (11:31)
I would much rather get back to you.

Jonathan Swan: (11:32)
Okay. That's fine.

President Donald J. Trump: (11:32)
Because I don't want to have you write in one month, I didn't make it.

Jonathan Swan: (11:35)
That's fine.

President Donald J. Trump: (11:35)
I missed it by a day.

Jonathan Swan: (11:36)
Yeah. I get it.

President Donald J. Trump: (11:37)
And it's a headline.

Jonathan Swan: (11:37)
Mr. President, I want to talk about the federal intervention.

President Donald J. Trump: (11:40)
Excuse me. One thing I would say about testing.

Jonathan Swan: (11:42)
Yeah. Yeah.

President Donald J. Trump: (11:43)
Because we test so much, we show cases. So, we show many, many cases. We show tremendous number of cases. I know you're smiling when I say that, but I'm telling you.

Jonathan Swan: (11:52)
Well, I mean, I've heard you say this.

President Donald J. Trump: (11:54)
I know. Other countries don't test like we do. So, they don't show case.

Jonathan Swan: (11:58)
Just a couple points on that. I wasn't going to continue on the testing, but you said it. So, we're testing so much because it's spread so far in America. And, when you-

President Donald J. Trump: (12:06)
We're testing so much because we had the ability to test.

Jonathan Swan: (12:08)
Okay.

President Donald J. Trump: (12:09)
Because we came up with test-

Jonathan Swan: (12:10)
But South Korea-

President Donald J. Trump: (12:11)
Jonathan, we didn't even have a test. When I took over, we didn't even have a test. Now, in all fairness-

Jonathan Swan: (12:17)
Why would you have a test?

President Donald J. Trump: (12:21)
There was no test for this-

Jonathan Swan: (12:23)
The virus didn't exist.

President Donald J. Trump: (12:23)
Excuse me. I was going to say-

Jonathan Swan: (12:23)
Okay.

President Donald J. Trump: (12:23)
There was no test for this. We didn't have a test because there was no test.

Jonathan Swan: (12:26)
Of course.

President Donald J. Trump: (12:27)
And, in a very short order, we got one test. We got another test.

Jonathan Swan: (12:30)
It was broken, the first one.

President Donald J. Trump: (12:31)
We got another. Many of those tests are now obsolete because it's called science.

Jonathan Swan: (12:34)
Right.

President Donald J. Trump: (12:34)
And, all of a sudden, something is better. But, because we tested so many people, 55, 60 million people, very soon, we get cases. You test. Some kid has even just a little runny nose. It's a case. And then, you report many cases. So, we look like we have more cases than massive countries like China, which by the way, doesn't report, as you know.

Jonathan Swan: (12:58)
Well, I don't put any stock in China's figures.

President Donald J. Trump: (13:00)
No. No. The point is-

Jonathan Swan: (13:01)
Yeah.

President Donald J. Trump: (13:01)
The point is, because we are so much better at testing than any other country in the world, we show more cases.

Jonathan Swan: (13:09)
The figure I look at is death. And death is going up now.

President Donald J. Trump: (13:12)
Okay. No, no.

Jonathan Swan: (13:12)
It's a thousand a day.

President Donald J. Trump: (13:14)
If you look at death-

Jonathan Swan: (13:15)
Yeah. It's going up again.

President Donald J. Trump: (13:16)
Let's look. Let's look.

Jonathan Swan: (13:17)
Daily death.

President Donald J. Trump: (13:17)
Take a look at some of these charts.

Jonathan Swan: (13:19)
I'd love to.

President Donald J. Trump: (13:20)
We're going to look.

Jonathan Swan: (13:21)
Let's look.

President Donald J. Trump: (13:21)
And, if you look at death per-

Jonathan Swan: (13:23)
Yeah. It's started to go up again.

President Donald J. Trump: (13:25)
Here is one. Well, right here, United States is lowest in numerous categories. We're lower than the world.

Jonathan Swan: (13:37)
Lower than the world?

President Donald J. Trump: (13:37)
We're lower than Europe.

Jonathan Swan: (13:39)
What does that mean? In what? In what?

President Donald J. Trump: (13:40)
Look. Take a look. Right there. Here is case death.

Jonathan Swan: (13:46)
Oh, you're doing death as a proportion of cases. I'm talking about death as a proportion of population. That's where the U.S. is really bad, much worse than South Korea, Germany, et cetera.

President Donald J. Trump: (13:55)
You can't do that.

Jonathan Swan: (13:56)
Why can't I do that?

President Donald J. Trump: (13:58)
You have to go by where... look. Here is the United States. You have to go by the cases. The cases are there.

Jonathan Swan: (14:04)
Why not as a proportion of population?

President Donald J. Trump: (14:07)
What it says is, when you have somebody where there's a case-

Jonathan Swan: (14:11)
Oh, okay.

President Donald J. Trump: (14:11)
The people that live from those cases.

Jonathan Swan: (14:14)
Oh. It's surely a relevant statistic to say, if the U.S. has X population and X percentage of death of that population versus South Korea-

President Donald J. Trump: (14:22)
No. Because you have to go by the cases.

Jonathan Swan: (14:22)
Well, look at South Korea, for example. 51 million population, 300 deaths. It's like, it's crazy compared to-

President Donald J. Trump: (14:28)
You don't know that.

Jonathan Swan: (14:29)
I do.

President Donald J. Trump: (14:30)
You don't know that.

Jonathan Swan: (14:31)
You think they're faking their statistics, South Korea? An advanced country?

President Donald J. Trump: (14:33)
I won't get into that because I have a very good relationship with the country.

Jonathan Swan: (14:36)
Yeah.

President Donald J. Trump: (14:37)
But you don't know that. And they have spikes. Look, here's one of-

Jonathan Swan: (14:39)
Germany, low 9,000.

President Donald J. Trump: (14:40)
Here's one. Here's one right here, United States.

Jonathan Swan: (14:43)
Let me look.

President Donald J. Trump: (14:44)
You take the number of cases.

Jonathan Swan: (14:45)
Okay.

President Donald J. Trump: (14:45)
Now look, we're last meaning we're first.

Jonathan Swan: (14:47)
Last? I don't know what we're first in.

President Donald J. Trump: (14:48)
We have the best.

Jonathan Swan: (14:49)
As a what?

President Donald J. Trump: (14:50)
Take a look again. It's cases.

Jonathan Swan: (14:51)
Okay. I'll just... okay.

President Donald J. Trump: (14:52)
And we have cases because of the testing.

Jonathan Swan: (14:54)
I mean, a thousand Americans die a day. But I understand. I understand on the cases, it's different.

President Donald J. Trump: (14:59)
No, but you're not reporting it correctly, Jonathan.

Jonathan Swan: (15:02)
I think I am, but-

President Donald J. Trump: (15:03)
If you take a look at this other chart... look, this is our testing. I believe this is the testing. Yeah.

Jonathan Swan: (15:09)
Yeah. We do more tests.

President Donald J. Trump: (15:10)
No, wait a minute. Well, don't we get credit for that? And, because we do more tests, we have more cases. In other words, we test more. We have... now, take a look. The top one, that's a good thing not a bad thing. But the top... Jonathan-

Jonathan Swan: (15:22)
If hospitals rates were going down and deaths were going down, I'd say, terrific. You deserve to be praised for testing.

President Donald J. Trump: (15:28)
Well, they don't even-

Jonathan Swan: (15:28)
But they are all going up.

President Donald J. Trump: (15:29)
Well, they very rarely talk-

Jonathan Swan: (15:30)
Plus, 60,000 Americans are in hospital, 1,000 dying a day.

President Donald J. Trump: (15:32)
If you watch the news or read the papers, they usually talk about new cases, new cases, new cases.

Jonathan Swan: (15:37)
I'm talking about death.

President Donald J. Trump: (15:38)
Well, you look at death.

Jonathan Swan: (15:39)
It's going up.

President Donald J. Trump: (15:39)
Death is way down from where it was.

Jonathan Swan: (15:42)
It's 1,000 a day.

President Donald J. Trump: (15:43)
Death-

Jonathan Swan: (15:43)
It was two and a half thousand. It went down to 500. Now, it's going up again.

President Donald J. Trump: (15:46)
Death... excuse me. Where it was is much higher than where it is right now.

Jonathan Swan: (15:50)
It went down and then it went up again.

President Donald J. Trump: (15:52)
It spiked, but now it's going down again.

Jonathan Swan: (15:53)
It's going up.

President Donald J. Trump: (15:53)
It's gone down in Arizona. It's going down in Florida.

Jonathan Swan: (15:55)
nationally it's going up.

President Donald J. Trump: (15:56)
It's going down in Texas. Take a look at this. These are the tests.

Jonathan Swan: (15:59)
It's going down in Florida?

President Donald J. Trump: (16:01)
Yeah. It leveled out and it's going down. That's my report, as of yesterday.

Jonathan Swan: (16:05)
Anyway, Mr. President, if I could change subjects.

President Donald J. Trump: (16:06)
It is going down in Arizona. It is gong down in Texas.

Jonathan Swan: (16:09)
Arizona it is. Arizona it is. Texas has big problems.

President Donald J. Trump: (16:10)
And it is spiked. It spiked and is now going down in Florida. It's evened out and going down in Florida.

Jonathan Swan: (16:15)
I'll have to see those figures.

President Donald J. Trump: (16:16)
But you have to look at this. This is the number of tests compared to the rest of the world.

Jonathan Swan: (16:19)
I don't deny your figures. You've done more tests by far than the rest of the world. I don't deny that.

President Donald J. Trump: (16:22)
Right. And, because we've done more tests, we have more cases.

Jonathan Swan: (16:24)
You have more infections.

President Donald J. Trump: (16:25)
Now, you can take them back. Check it out in your office.

Jonathan Swan: (16:28)
Mr. President, different subject, it's been widely reported that the U.S. has intelligence indicating that Russia paid bounties or offered to pay bounties to Taliban fighters to kill American soldiers.

President Donald J. Trump: (16:37)
Right. Right.

Jonathan Swan: (16:37)
You had a phone call with Vladimir Putin on July 23rd. Did you bring up this issue?

President Donald J. Trump: (16:42)
No. That was a phone call to discuss other things. And frankly, that's an issue that many people said was fake news.

Jonathan Swan: (16:50)
Who said it was fake news?

President Donald J. Trump: (16:51)
I think a lot of people. If you look at some of the wonderful folks from the Bush Administration, some of them, not any friends of mine, were saying that it's a fake issue. But a lot of people said, it's a fake issue.

Jonathan Swan: (17:04)
There was dispute within intelligence.

President Donald J. Trump: (17:05)
But we had a call. We had a call talking about nuclear proliferation.

Jonathan Swan: (17:08)
Right.

President Donald J. Trump: (17:08)
Which is a very big subject where they would like to do something. And so would I. We discussed numbers things. We did not discuss that. No.

Jonathan Swan: (17:14)
And you've never discussed it with him.

President Donald J. Trump: (17:15)
I have never discussed it with him. No. I would. I'd have no problem with it.

Jonathan Swan: (17:19)
But you don't believe the intelligence.

President Donald J. Trump: (17:19)
But you know it never got to-

Jonathan Swan: (17:20)
It's because you don't believe the intelligence. That's why.

President Donald J. Trump: (17:24)
It's interesting. Nobody ever brings up China. They always bring Russia, Russia, Russia. If we can do something with Russia in terms of nuclear proliferation, which is a very big problem.

Jonathan Swan: (17:34)
Right.

President Donald J. Trump: (17:34)
Bigger problem than global warming.

Jonathan Swan: (17:36)
Right.

President Donald J. Trump: (17:36)
A much bigger problem than global warming in terms of the real world, that would be a great thing. No. It never reached my desk.

Jonathan Swan: (17:43)
Okay.

President Donald J. Trump: (17:43)
You know why? Because intelligence, they didn't think it was real.

Jonathan Swan: (17:48)
It was in your written brief though about it.

President Donald J. Trump: (17:50)
They didn't think it was worthy. I wouldn't mind. If it reached my desk, I would have done something about it. It never reached my desk because-

Jonathan Swan: (17:57)
Do you read your written brief?

President Donald J. Trump: (17:58)
I do.

Jonathan Swan: (17:58)
Do you?

President Donald J. Trump: (17:58)
I read it a lot.

Jonathan Swan: (17:59)
Really?

President Donald J. Trump: (17:59)
I read a lot. They like to say I don't read. I read a lot.

Jonathan Swan: (18:03)
You read your daily intelligence brief?

President Donald J. Trump: (18:04)
I comprehend extraordinarily well, probably better than anybody that you've interviewed in a long time. I read a lot. I spend a lot of time at meetings. Usually it's once a day or at least two or three times a week, intelligence meetings.

Jonathan Swan: (18:18)
Because this was apparently in your-

President Donald J. Trump: (18:19)
Talking about India, talking about the problems with China.

Jonathan Swan: (18:22)
Right.

President Donald J. Trump: (18:22)
Talking about so many different elements of the world.

Jonathan Swan: (18:25)
Mm-hmm (affirmative).

President Donald J. Trump: (18:25)
The world is a very angry place, if you look all over the world. We call up. I see a 22 soldiers were killed in India with China fighting over the border. It's been raging for many, many decades. And they've been fighting and back and forth. I have so many briefings on so many different countries, but this one didn't reach my desk.

Jonathan Swan: (18:50)
The reason I say this is, even if you don't believe this particular piece of intelligence, and there is dispute, no doubt, there is dispute in the intelligence committee about it, John Nicholson, former head of forces in Afghanistan said, and this is when he was working for you, that Russia is supplying weapons to the Taliban. Isn't that enough to challenge Putin over the killings of U.S. soldiers?

President Donald J. Trump: (19:10)
Well, we sold them weapons when they were fighting Russia too. When they were fighting with the Taliban in Afghanistan-

Jonathan Swan: (19:17)
Yeah. But that's a different era.

President Donald J. Trump: (19:18)
Well, it's a different... I'm just saying. Yes.

Jonathan Swan: (19:20)
But how does that affect-

President Donald J. Trump: (19:21)
I'm just saying we did that too.

Jonathan Swan: (19:22)
But how does that-

President Donald J. Trump: (19:23)
I don't know. I didn't ask Nicholson about that. He was there for a long time. Didn't have great success because he was there before me. And then, ultimately, I made a change.

Jonathan Swan: (19:30)
But you surely heard that. Right? I mean, it's well known in the intelligence community, that they're arming the Taliban, Russia.

President Donald J. Trump: (19:36)
I don't know. When you say arming is-

Jonathan Swan: (19:38)
Supplying weapons.

President Donald J. Trump: (19:39)
Paying or they-

Jonathan Swan: (19:40)
Russia is supplying weapons and money to the Taliban.

President Donald J. Trump: (19:42)
I have heard that but, again, it's never reached my desk.

Jonathan Swan: (19:48)
I mean, he said it on the record when he was in-

President Donald J. Trump: (19:50)
Hey, Russia doesn't want anything to do with Afghanistan. Let me just say about Russia. Russia used to be a thing called the Soviet Union. Because of Afghanistan, they went bankrupt. They became Russia, just so you do understand. Okay? The last-

President Donald J. Trump: (20:03)
Went bankrupt, they became Russia, just so you do understand, okay? The last thing that Russia wants to do is get too much involved with Afghanistan. They tried that once. It didn't work out too well.

Jonathan Swan: (20:09)
Last question on this subject.

President Donald J. Trump: (20:10)
And by the way, we're largely out of Afghanistan, as you probably know.

Jonathan Swan: (20:13)
Well, I wanted to ask you about that. The US troop level in Afghanistan right now is roughly the same as it was when you-

President Donald J. Trump: (20:21)
No, you're wrong. No.

Jonathan Swan: (20:22)
Mr. President. I'm sorry. We have to do-

President Donald J. Trump: (20:24)
Okay. Are you ready?

Jonathan Swan: (20:25)
No, no. I need-

President Donald J. Trump: (20:25)
We'll be down in a very short... It's already planned.

Jonathan Swan: (20:27)
Well, that's a different question.

President Donald J. Trump: (20:28)
Let me explain. We'll be down in a very short period of time to 8,000, then we're going to be down to 4,000. We're negotiating right now. We've been there for 19 years.

Jonathan Swan: (20:38)
I know. I know.

President Donald J. Trump: (20:38)
19 years.

Jonathan Swan: (20:39)
But if you just let me finish my question.

President Donald J. Trump: (20:40)
We'll be getting out.

Jonathan Swan: (20:41)
I understand. Look, when you came in, it was 8,800. You boosted to 14,000, and now you're back down to 8,500.

President Donald J. Trump: (20:49)
We're now-

Jonathan Swan: (20:49)
My question to you-

President Donald J. Trump: (20:51)
We'll be at 4,000. I'll get you the exact-

Jonathan Swan: (20:52)
When?

President Donald J. Trump: (20:53)
Very soon. Very soon.

Jonathan Swan: (20:54)
What will be the number? Very soon? 4,000?

President Donald J. Trump: (20:56)
Very soon. Yeah, very soon.

Jonathan Swan: (20:57)
Like how soon?

President Donald J. Trump: (20:58)
I don't want to tell you that. I don't want to tell you.

Jonathan Swan: (21:00)
That's big news.

President Donald J. Trump: (21:01)
What is? That is [crosstalk 00:21:02]

Jonathan Swan: (21:02)
It's going down to 4,000.

President Donald J. Trump: (21:03)
I've always said-

Jonathan Swan: (21:04)
Well, what about election day?

President Donald J. Trump: (21:06)
We will get largely out-

Jonathan Swan: (21:07)
On election day, how many American troops will be in Afghanistan?

President Donald J. Trump: (21:12)
Probably anywhere from four to 5,000.

Jonathan Swan: (21:16)
That's almost as many as when you came into office.

President Donald J. Trump: (21:17)
No, it's not. We had-

Jonathan Swan: (21:18)
8,000.

President Donald J. Trump: (21:19)
We had much more. We had a lot of people over there too.

Jonathan Swan: (21:21)
8,800 [crosstalk 00:21:22] troops.

President Donald J. Trump: (21:22)
A lot of people. And we did a good job. We wiped out ISIS. Let me just tell you what you don't see.

Jonathan Swan: (21:25)
Have you thought about going down to zero?

President Donald J. Trump: (21:26)
We took out, in Syria, we took out ISIS. We a hundred percent of the caliphate. When I took over Obama, it was totally rampant. ISIS was all over the place. We took them out. We captured them. We killed them a hundred percent, not 99%. I wanted to get out at 99. Everyone said, "Oh, please, would you stay?" I stayed. 99% was good, but a hundred percent of the caliphate.

President Donald J. Trump: (21:52)
We took out Soleimani. We took out al-Baghdadi. We took out people that nobody thought possible. Al-Baghdadi was the biggest terrorist of them all. They couldn't find him. I took him out. Soleimani, even bigger. I took him out. I've done things that no other president's done. None. I mean, fortunately, not too many. They should have never been in the Middle East. The decision to go to the Middle East and get into the Middle East was the single biggest mistake made in the history of our country. That's my opinion.

Jonathan Swan: (22:22)
You told Fox News recently that you couldn't say whether you'd accept the results of the 2020 election. What does that actually look like as the sitting president? I mean, it's unprecedented. What would that actually look like?

President Donald J. Trump: (22:36)
Well, Hillary Clinton never accepted them.

Jonathan Swan: (22:37)
Well, she conceded on them.

President Donald J. Trump: (22:39)
I mean, she doesn't accept them and she got beaten very easily.

Jonathan Swan: (22:41)
But that's the important point. That's the important point. She conceded on election night. Now, she grumbled about it and said all sorts of-

President Donald J. Trump: (22:45)
Grumbled? Grumbled? She wrote books about it.

Jonathan Swan: (22:46)
Okay, fine, she wrote books.

President Donald J. Trump: (22:47)
And don't use the word grumbled.

Jonathan Swan: (22:48)
Fine. But-

President Donald J. Trump: (22:48)
She wrote books about it.

Jonathan Swan: (22:50)
That's fine, but I just-

President Donald J. Trump: (22:50)
She got beaten easy.

Jonathan Swan: (22:51)
I get it. I get it.

President Donald J. Trump: (22:52)
306 to 223. That's a lot. That's a lot.

Jonathan Swan: (22:54)
I'm not disputing you beat Hillary Clinton. Listen, what of asking is you'll be the sitting president in the White House. What does that look like not accepting-

President Donald J. Trump: (23:03)
I'll tell you what it looks like.

Jonathan Swan: (23:04)
Are you litigating?

President Donald J. Trump: (23:05)
Let me tell you what it looks.

Jonathan Swan: (23:05)
Okay.

President Donald J. Trump: (23:07)
So we have a new phenomena. It's called mail-in voting, where you send, where a governor-

Jonathan Swan: (23:13)
New?

President Donald J. Trump: (23:13)
Well, it's new-

Jonathan Swan: (23:14)
It's been here since the Civil War. Americans have-

President Donald J. Trump: (23:15)
In terms of kind of the kind of millions and millions of ballots. They've never done anything like that.

Jonathan Swan: (23:21)
It'll be bigger this year because of the pandemic.

President Donald J. Trump: (23:23)
Bigger? Not bigger, massively bigger.

Jonathan Swan: (23:25)
Yeah, because of the pandemic.

President Donald J. Trump: (23:26)
So they're going to send tens of millions of ballots to California, all over the place, to who's going to get them. I have a friend who lives in Westchester County-

Jonathan Swan: (23:33)
They send applications, not allots.

President Donald J. Trump: (23:35)
His son passed away. He had a beautiful, wonderful son. Young man. Passed away seven years ago. He called me, he said, "I just got a ballot for my son, Robert."

Jonathan Swan: (23:46)
Probably an application.

President Donald J. Trump: (23:46)
"He died seven years ago." Somebody got at ballot for a dog. Somebody got a ballot for something else. You got millions of ballots going, nobody even knows where they're going. You look at some of the corruption having to do with universal mail-in voting... Absentee voting is okay. You have to apply, you have to go through a process.

Jonathan Swan: (24:03)
You have to apply for mail-in. It's the same thing.

President Donald J. Trump: (24:05)
Absentee voting is good. Look, you're sending it out-

Jonathan Swan: (24:07)
Let's do concrete. Let's do concrete.

President Donald J. Trump: (24:08)
Jonathan, they're sending out-

Jonathan Swan: (24:10)
Applications. You download them off [crosstalk 00:24:12]

President Donald J. Trump: (24:12)
Governors, millions of ballots. There is-

Jonathan Swan: (24:14)
No, they're not. It's applications. You can get them off the internet.

President Donald J. Trump: (24:16)
There is no way you can go through a mail-in vote without massive cheating.

Jonathan Swan: (24:22)
I honestly don't understand this topic with-

President Donald J. Trump: (24:24)
Go ahead.

Jonathan Swan: (24:25)
The Republican party has an extremely well-funded vote by mail program. Your campaign puts out emails telling people to vote by mail.

President Donald J. Trump: (24:33)
Correct.

Jonathan Swan: (24:34)
Your daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, she did robocalls in California saying it's safe and secure, mail-in voting.

President Donald J. Trump: (24:40)
Let me tell you. We have no choice.

Jonathan Swan: (24:41)
The Republic won. That was an all mail-in race.

President Donald J. Trump: (24:43)
Let me tell you. You ready?

Jonathan Swan: (24:45)
Yeah.

President Donald J. Trump: (24:45)
We have no choice because right now, we have, but we have many court cases that we're waiting. We have one filed in Western Pennsylvania. We have many court cases where we're trying to end it. We went through World War I, you went to the polls, you voted, we went through World War II, you went to the polls, you voted.

Jonathan Swan: (25:01)
You've had mail-in voting since the Civil War.

President Donald J. Trump: (25:02)
And now because of the China virus, we're supposed to stay home, send millions of ballots all over the country, millions and millions. You know, you could have a case where this election won't be decided on the evening of November 3rd.

Jonathan Swan: (25:16)
Absolutely. What's wrong with that?

President Donald J. Trump: (25:16)
This election could be decided two months later,

Jonathan Swan: (25:18)
It won't be two months, but what's wrong with the proper mail-in count?

President Donald J. Trump: (25:20)
It could be decided many months later.

Jonathan Swan: (25:22)
Have you discussed the-

President Donald J. Trump: (25:23)
You know why? Because lots of things will happen during that period of time. Especially when you have tight margins, lots of things can happen. There's never been anything like this when you try... Now, of course, right now, we have to live with it, but we're challenging it in many courts, as you know, all over the country.

Jonathan Swan: (25:40)
You're going to [crosstalk 00:25:38]? Mr. President, the other day, a reporter asked you about Ghislaine Maxwell. You said, "I just wish her well, frankly. I've met her numerous

times over the years, especially since I lived in Palm Beach, but I wish her well, whatever it is." Mr. President, Ghislaine Maxwell has been arrested on allegations of child sex trafficking. Why would you wish such a person well?

President Donald J. Trump: (25:59)
Well, first of all, I don't know that, but I do know this-

Jonathan Swan: (26:01)
She has. She's been arrested for that. You know that.

President Donald J. Trump: (26:02)
Her friend or boyfriend-

Jonathan Swan: (26:04)
Epstein.

President Donald J. Trump: (26:05)
Was either killed or committed suicide in jail. She's now in jail. Yeah, I wish you well, I'd wish you well, I'd wish a lot of people well. Good luck. Let them prove somebody was guilty. I mean, you do know that she [crosstalk 00:26:17]

Jonathan Swan: (26:17)
Oh. So you're saying you hope she doesn't die in jail? Is that what you mean by wish her well?

President Donald J. Trump: (26:20)
Well, her boyfriend died in jail and people are still trying to figure out how did it happened? Was it suicide? Was he killed? And I do wish her well. I'm not looking for anything bad for her. I'm not looking bad for anybody. And they took that and made it such a big deal-

Jonathan Swan: (26:32)
I mean, she's a alleged child sex trafficker.

President Donald J. Trump: (26:35)
But all it is is her boyfriend died. He died in jail. Was he killed? Was it suicide? I do, I wish her well.

Jonathan Swan: (26:45)
Let's move to Portland. I'm sure you've seen the disturbing footage of people in fatigues beating the Navy veteran.

President Donald J. Trump: (26:53)
No, no, no, no, no, no. No. No.

Jonathan Swan: (26:54)
Well, it's there.

President Donald J. Trump: (26:55)
here you go, the fake news.

Jonathan Swan: (26:56)
It's not fake news, it's on video.

President Donald J. Trump: (26:58)
No, no.

Jonathan Swan: (26:58)
Pepper spraying him.

President Donald J. Trump: (26:59)
For 59 days, these people were anarchists and agitators, and some protesters, but these were anarchists. These people were beating the hell out of the city. They were beating up our federal buildings and our federal courthouse. We told the police to stop it. You make sure. And the police wouldn't do it. Not the police-

Jonathan Swan: (27:17)
Your own justice department and Homeland Security Inspector General-

President Donald J. Trump: (27:19)
Excuse me.

Jonathan Swan: (27:19)
But your Inspector Generals are investigating unconstitutional-

President Donald J. Trump: (27:23)
You're trying now to blame law enforcement instead of anarchists-

Jonathan Swan: (27:27)
I'm not.

President Donald J. Trump: (27:27)
Instead of Antifa.

Jonathan Swan: (27:29)
I'm not.

President Donald J. Trump: (27:29)
It's Antifa and anarchists that are causing the problems, not law enforcement. Our law enforcement, if we didn't have people at our courthouse, and they're strong, tough people, and they don't want... They try and be very good, believe me. But if we didn't have people there, you would have your federal courthouse, a $600 million building, you would have that thing burned to the ground right now.

Jonathan Swan: (27:51)
I'm asking you about tactics and about the unmarked vans where they're rounding people up. And I want to-

President Donald J. Trump: (27:55)
Okay, let me tell you about unmarked.

Jonathan Swan: (27:56)
Can I just finish my question.

President Donald J. Trump: (27:57)
Well let me tell you about unmarked.

Jonathan Swan: (27:58)
Could I just finish my question? Because it relates to this. I promise. This is from Rand Paul. "We cannot give up liberty for security. Local law enforcement can and should be handling these situations in our cities, but there is no place for federal troops or unidentified federal agents rounding people up at will." What is your response to Senator Paul?

President Donald J. Trump: (28:16)
First of all, these are Homeland Security people. They're securing a courthouse.

Jonathan Swan: (28:21)
They're border patrol.

President Donald J. Trump: (28:22)
They're Homeland Security.

Jonathan Swan: (28:24)
Elite units.

President Donald J. Trump: (28:24)
Border, hopefully they have ICE in there.

Jonathan Swan: (28:26)
Camo< gas [inaudible 00:28:26].

President Donald J. Trump: (28:26)
Hopefully they have ICE. Now, do you know why they're unmarked?

Jonathan Swan: (28:29)
Why?

President Donald J. Trump: (28:30)
Because these terrorists, these Antifa people, these people that are at anarchists and agitators, when they see the name on a uniform of a person, a policeman or a law

enforcement person, they find out where that person lives. And then they go and they scare the hell out of the person's family. And so they do it for that reason. It's just common... There's nothing secret about this. And you know it.

President Donald J. Trump: (28:54)
You see what's going on right now. We have Chad Wolf. They have people. He's doing a fantastic job. He's the acting head. He's doing a fantastic job. Chad Wolf has pickets and very dangerous looking people outside of his house. He's going to be just fine. He's tough and he's got people, but if you have the names on all of these uniforms, you'll have these maniacs in front of their houses, scaring their family and their wives or husbands, whatever it may be. I think it's a very good reason not to have your name. Why should you have identification? "My name is Bill Smith and here's where I live and I'm a member of-"

Jonathan Swan: (29:33)
The really serious concern is the reports-

President Donald J. Trump: (29:34)
No, no, that's a serious concern.

Jonathan Swan: (29:36)
No, no, not about that. The serious concern is the reports of people being rounded up and not being told why they're being detained. That's what's being investigated by-

President Donald J. Trump: (29:42)
Why? Why are they being detained?

Jonathan Swan: (29:43)
Mr. President, the Inspectors Generals-

President Donald J. Trump: (29:45)
You know why? You know why they're being detained? Well, [crosstalk 00:29:47].

Jonathan Swan: (29:48)
There's an investigation. Do you support that investigation?

President Donald J. Trump: (29:50)
Well, I haven't seen the result yet. Let me see the result.

Jonathan Swan: (29:51)
But you support the initiative of it?

President Donald J. Trump: (29:54)
No, I think that actually-

Jonathan Swan: (29:56)
You don't?

President Donald J. Trump: (29:56)
I think Antifa should be investigated, not the law enforcement. They're investigating, think of [crosstalk 00:30:01]

Jonathan Swan: (30:01)
They shouldn't be investigating?

President Donald J. Trump: (30:02)
Have you been watching television-

President Donald J. Trump: (30:03)
They're investigating-

Jonathan Swan: (30:03)
They shouldn't be investigating?

President Donald J. Trump: (30:03)
Have you been watching television?

Jonathan Swan: (30:04)
I have.

President Donald J. Trump: (30:04)
Have you been seeing the violence?

Jonathan Swan: (30:06)
Sure.

President Donald J. Trump: (30:06)
Now, if you watch NBC News like I watch NBC fake news. I'm watching it. Lester Holt, real beauty. I'm watching this NBC News sham, and you have a mayor named Wheeler and he's standing out there and he's being accosted by the people. You know that. I mean, it's horrible what they're doing to him in Portland, the mayor of Portland and he thought he'd go out. He'd be a man.

President Donald J. Trump: (30:29)
What they were doing and saying, and everything else to him, I happened to watch it on a different station. He had to get out. He had five security guards.

Jonathan Swan: (30:36)
I saw it.

President Donald J. Trump: (30:36)
He got out with his life. Okay.

Jonathan Swan: (30:38)
Mr. President-

President Donald J. Trump: (30:38)
Wait. If you watch NBC News, they make them like he's standing there bravely fighting with the people, in a positive sense, that everything is wonderful.

President Donald J. Trump: (30:48)
No. He went out there. He's lucky he got away with his life because they would've killed him. He had five guards, but NBC News showed it like he's standing with the people for justice. Look, those people, take a look at what they've done to the courthouse. Take a look at what they've done to the streets. Take a look at the violence.

Jonathan Swan: (31:06)
It's getting worse since they've gone in. It's getting worse.

President Donald J. Trump: (31:09)
Actually, it's getting better. We had a very good... We've arrested a lot of people and we now have a 10 year rule. You try not to knock down our courthouse-

Jonathan Swan: (31:15)
More businesses damaged, more violence-

President Donald J. Trump: (31:17)
You touch our courthouse, you go to jail for 10 years.

Jonathan Swan: (31:19)
Turning to the rest of the country, we haven't seen protests like this since the '60s. I mean, we're seeing-

President Donald J. Trump: (31:25)
These are Democrat-run cities.

Jonathan Swan: (31:26)
If I could finish my question. If I could finish my question.

President Donald J. Trump: (31:28)
And they're doing it for political reasons.

Jonathan Swan: (31:30)
You said you've done so much for African Americans.

President Donald J. Trump: (31:32)
I have.

Jonathan Swan: (31:33)
But there are Americans-

President Donald J. Trump: (31:35)
Criminal justice reform, opportunity.

Jonathan Swan: (31:36)
Yeah, I understand, but let me finish. There were Americans out in the streets asking for change. Mr. President, have you ever met with a Black Lives Matter activist to hear them out, hear their arguments?

President Donald J. Trump: (31:46)
Well, Black Lives Matter started off to me very badly because it was-

Jonathan Swan: (31:50)
Did you ever meet with one?

President Donald J. Trump: (31:52)
... pigs in a blanket, burn them like bacon. That was the first time I ever of Black... That was three, four years ago. Pigs meaning policemen. Pigs is what they're referring to, in a blanket, fry them like bacon. So I got off to a bad start. I got off to a very bad start.

Jonathan Swan: (32:11)
Would you meet with a-

President Donald J. Trump: (32:11)
And so did [crosstalk 00:32:12].

Jonathan Swan: (32:12)
Would you with a Black Lives Matter activist?

President Donald J. Trump: (32:13)
I would. But I think right now when they paint-

Jonathan Swan: (32:17)
Why haven't you?

President Donald J. Trump: (32:17)
... the sign. Nobody's asked for a meeting, right? I've never been, nobody's ever asked me for a meeting. Let me tell you with African Americans, I'm doing very well. They had the best employment numbers they've ever had. They had the best job numbers they've ever had. They were making more money than they ever made. We were all set until we got hit by China with the virus. Jonathan, there was actually, we were becoming a very unified country.

Jonathan Swan: (32:39)
Do you believe that-

President Donald J. Trump: (32:40)
Because of success.

Jonathan Swan: (32:41)
I understand. Do you believe though, Mr. President, that many police treat black people differently from white people?

President Donald J. Trump: (32:48)
Well, I hope not. I hope not. Certainly the...

Jonathan Swan: (32:51)
You've seen the statistics.

President Donald J. Trump: (32:53)
The knee on the neck was a disgrace. Okay?

Jonathan Swan: (32:55)
Yeah.

President Donald J. Trump: (32:55)
It was a disgrace.

Jonathan Swan: (32:56)
I'm talking about what does systemic racism mean to you?

President Donald J. Trump: (33:00)
I hope the answer to that question is no. Does anybody really answer that question accurately? Does anybody really know?

Jonathan Swan: (33:08)
But what about not hope? What about analysis? What's your cold-hearted view of it?

President Donald J. Trump: (33:10)
I have seen where there is a difference and I don't want there to be a difference. I don't like that there would be a difference. But with that being said-

Jonathan Swan: (33:18)
Why do you think Black men are two and a half times-

President Donald J. Trump: (33:19)
Police have killed white people-

Jonathan Swan: (33:21)
I know, but why do you think Black men-

President Donald J. Trump: (33:22)
... in larger number, police have killed white people.

Jonathan Swan: (33:25)
In quantity, but why do you think Black men are two and a half times more likely to be killed by police than white men?

President Donald J. Trump: (33:29)
That I don't know-

Jonathan Swan: (33:30)
Why?

President Donald J. Trump: (33:30)
... but I don't like it.

Jonathan Swan: (33:32)
But you must've thought about it.

President Donald J. Trump: (33:33)
I don't know why, but I don't like it. I do know this-

Jonathan Swan: (33:36)
Does it speak to something systemic?

President Donald J. Trump: (33:37)
... that police have killed many white people also.

Jonathan Swan: (33:39)
But proportionally, what does it speak to?

President Donald J. Trump: (33:42)
It speaks to something, if that's the number?

Jonathan Swan: (33:45)
It is the number.

President Donald J. Trump: (33:45)
Okay. If that's the number, it speaks to something that to me is unacceptable.

Jonathan Swan: (33:49)
And what do you do about it then?

President Donald J. Trump: (33:51)
Well, I think we've already done a lot of things-

Jonathan Swan: (33:52)
But you haven't, it still exists.

President Donald J. Trump: (33:53)
Let me just tell you.

Jonathan Swan: (33:54)
No, no, I understand your achievements. I know what you're going to say. I'm not suggesting you haven't done a lot economically-

President Donald J. Trump: (33:58)
I've done a thing called criminal justice reform.

Jonathan Swan: (34:00)
I get it, I'm just saying what changes-

President Donald J. Trump: (34:01)
And your friend President Obama couldn't get done.

Jonathan Swan: (34:02)
He's not my friend. I'm asking about a statistic.

President Donald J. Trump: (34:04)
He tried, but he couldn't get it done. I got criminal justice [crosstalk 00:34:07]-

Jonathan Swan: (34:07)
I get it. I get it.

President Donald J. Trump: (34:07)
I got opportunities on, I took care of the historically Black... If you look at what I've done for colleges, for Black colleges and universities, I got them funding. Obama never did it. I did more for the Black community than anybody with the possible exception of Abraham Lincoln, whether you like it or not. People say, "Oh, that's interesting."

Jonathan Swan: (34:31)
You really believe you did more than Lyndon Johnson who passed the Civil Rights Act?

President Donald J. Trump: (34:34)
I think I did, yeah.

Jonathan Swan: (34:34)
How? How possibly did you-

President Donald J. Trump: (34:36)
Because I got criminal justice reform done, I got prison reform-

Jonathan Swan: (34:38)
Lyndon Johnson-

President Donald J. Trump: (34:39)
I've done things. Well-

Jonathan Swan: (34:41)
He passed the Civil Rights Act.

President Donald J. Trump: (34:43)
Ask. Ask. How has it worked out? If you take a look at what Lyndon Johnson did?

Jonathan Swan: (34:46)
You think the Civil Rights Act was a mistake?

President Donald J. Trump: (34:46)
How has it worked out? Because frankly, it took a long time, but for African Americans-

Jonathan Swan: (34:53)
But you think that was a mistake?

President Donald J. Trump: (34:54)
... under my administration, Jonathan, under my administration, African Americans were doing better than they have ever done in the history of this country. So I did a lot, job numbers, all of it, money. They had money, they were getting great. Their percentage was up, their housing ownership was up. They did better than they've ever done until we got hit-

Jonathan Swan: (35:12)
I just don't know how you can-

President Donald J. Trump: (35:13)
... and now you know what we're doing? I'm building it up again. We're going to have it. Next year will be a great year, unless it's screwed up by somebody that doesn't know what he's doing, which could happen, but I don't think it will.

Jonathan Swan: (35:24)
John Lewis is lying in state in the U.S. Capitol. How do you think history will remember John Lewis?

President Donald J. Trump: (35:29)
I don't know. I really don't know. I don't know. I don't know John Lewis. He chose not to come to my inauguration. He chose... I never met John Lewis, actually, I don't believe.

Jonathan Swan: (35:42)
Do you find him impressive?

President Donald J. Trump: (35:46)
I can't say one or the other. I find a lot of people impressive. I find many people not impressive. But no, but I didn't go-

Jonathan Swan: (35:52)
Do you find his story impressive?

President Donald J. Trump: (35:53)
He didn't come to my inauguration. He didn't come to my State of the Union speeches, and that's okay. That's his right. And again, nobody has done more-

Jonathan Swan: (36:02)
Right, but back-

President Donald J. Trump: (36:03)
... for Black Americans than I have.

Jonathan Swan: (36:05)
I understand.

President Donald J. Trump: (36:05)
He should've come. I think he made a big mistake by not showing up.

Jonathan Swan: (36:08)
But taking your relationship with him out of it, do you find his story impressive? What he's done for this country?

President Donald J. Trump: (36:14)
He was a person that devoted a lot of energy and a lot of heart to civil rights, but there were many others also.

Jonathan Swan: (36:23)
There's a petition to rename the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama as the John Lewis Bridge. Would you support that idea?

President Donald J. Trump: (36:32)
I would have no objection to it if they've like to do it.

Jonathan Swan: (36:34)
Yeah? It's a good idea?

President Donald J. Trump: (36:34)
Would have no objection to it whatsoever.

Jonathan Swan: (36:36)
Mr. President, you've been so generous with your time and we really appreciate.

President Donald J. Trump: (36:39)
Well, thank you very much. Great honor.

Jonathan Swan: (36:40)
Thank you so much.

President Donald J. Trump: (36:41)
Thank you.

Speaker 1: (36:45)
Okay, thank you.

President Donald J. Trump: (36:46)
Thank you very much.

Jonathan Swan: (36:47)
Thank you, sir.

Interview: Raymond Arroyo Interviews Donald Trump on EWTN's 'World Over' - June 22, 2020

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Raymond Arroyo

00:00:00 - 00:00:13 (14 sec)

Mr. President, this week we saw Columbus go down, Roosevelt is now going down, St. Junipero Serra, who built all the missions along California. What can you and the federal government do about this?
President

St. Junipero Serra

Columbus

Mr. President

federal government

Negative

Donald Trump

00:00:13 - 00:00:21 (8 sec)

By the way, Gandhi, OK. You saw Ulysses S. Grant, where they want to take him down. He's the one that stopped --
Ulysses S. Grant

way

Gandhi

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:00:21 - 00:00:21 (0 sec)

[Inaudible]
Negative

Donald Trump

00:00:21 - 00:00:40 (19 sec)

-- the ones that everybody disliked so much. You know, uh, it's a disgrace. Also, remember, some of this is great artwork. This is magnificent artwork. As good as there is anywhere in the world. As good as you see in France, as good as you see anywhere, it's a disgrace. Most of these people don't even know what they're taking down.
France

great artwork

magnificent artwork

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:00:40 - 00:00:43 (3 sec)

Is there anything you can do? Will you add it to the National Museum?
National Museum

Neutral

Donald Trump

00:00:43 - 00:00:57 (14 sec)

We're going to do something very soon. We're going to do an executive order and we're going to make the cities guard their monuments. This is a disgrace. Now, for the most part, they're not federal, oh, it was up to them. They were already talking about Thomas Jefferson, the great Jefferson Memorial.
great Jefferson Memorial

executive order

Thomas Jefferson

part

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:00:57 - 00:00:58 (0 sec)

Washington.
Washington

Neutral

Donald Trump

00:00:58 - 00:00:59 (1 sec)

They're talking about --
Theyre

Neutral

Raymond Arroyo

00:00:59 - 00:00:59 (1 sec)

Lincoln.
Lincoln

Neutral

Donald Trump

00:00:59 - 00:01:03 (4 sec)

-- Washington. Lincoln, I haven't heard, but they're probably talking about that too.
Lincoln

Washington

havent

Neutral

Raymond Arroyo

00:01:03 - 00:01:14 (11 sec)

I need to talk for a moment about DACA. That big DACA ruling came down. The bishops of the United States hailed that ruling. There are 700,000 dreamers out there. What do you mean to do with them?
DACA

bishops of the United States

big DACA ruling

Positive

Donald Trump

00:01:14 - 00:01:39 (25 sec)

So what we want to do is win the case and then work it out because we'll be able to work it out. They're not going to have anything to worry about, but you know, we actually, we didn't lose that case. That case was -- the statement was made, refile it, or do whatever you want in a different forum. Didn't like -- John Roberts didn't like the form. So we're going to give it to

him in a different form. It was a similar rule to the census, which frankly, I wanted to do it a different way. I should have done the way I originally wanted. I wanted to go back in --
similar rule

John Roberts didnt

case

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:01:39 - 00:01:39 (0 sec)

All right.
Positive

Donald Trump

00:01:39 - 00:01:48 (9 sec)

-- but they just went with it. But this is a very important thing. And it actually gives the president more power. I should be happy, but I don't want that power.
thing

important thing

president

power

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:01:48 - 00:01:55 (7 sec)

We are seeing unprecedented violence across the country, Mr. President. In this CHOP, this territory in Seattle, you've been watching this on the news.
unprecedented violence

Mr. President

territory

Negative

Donald Trump

00:01:55 - 00:01:55 (0 sec)

I am.
Neutral

Raymond Arroyo

00:01:55 - 00:02:00 (5 sec)

Is there anything you, from this office, can do to restore order and safety?
office

order

safety

Positive

Donald Trump

00:02:00 - 00:02:53 (53 sec)

Right. Raymond, what I want, I want people to watch just for a little while. It's all Democrats, usually, liberal Democrats. Take a look, whether it's Chicago, it's Democrat, Seattle, it's Democrat. The state of Washington, it's Democrat, Portland, it's Democrat. All of these places are run by Democrats. 20 out of 20 are Democrat-run. They don't know what they're doing. And if Biden got in, this country would be a disaster because you know, you don't report on 98% of the places. Take a look at the way we're running things. We're running them good. And if I weren't president, they would have over -- and you talk about the statutes, we wouldn't have any statues standing right now because I did things that you don't know about to save a lot of them. Now they ripped one down the other night, right in front of the police headquarters. We have a liberal Democrat mayor and she should not allow, have allowed that to happen.
98%

Seattle

Portland

werent president

liberal Democrats

state of Washington

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:02:53 - 00:03:11 (18 sec)

I need to get to something I've been hearing a lot of in Evangelical and Catholic circles. They're saying, Joe Biden says, he's opposed to the death penalty. And in these Catholic and Evangelical circles, they say he supports efforts to end climate change. Therefore he's pro-life and you're not. What would your response be?
Catholic circles

Joe Biden

Evangelical circles

Negative

Donald Trump

00:03:11 - 00:04:06 (55 sec)

So, first of all, Joe Biden, I am totally in favor of the death penalty for heinous crimes, OK. That's, uh, that's the way it is, all right? Uh, I'm pro-life he's not. And the Democrats, whose -- whose -- look who he's putting on the court, they want to put people on the court. You have no chance. So I'm pro-life the Democrats aren't, nobody can say that Biden isn't -- look at -- look at his stance over the years. But you know, and I know Biden is not going to be running things. It's going to be run by other people. Biden's shot. It's one of those things. I hate to say it, but Biden is shot. But the Democrats are not -- it's not just him, it's a party, it's a platform. Take a look at the platform. Look at the governor of Virginia. Look at what he did. He did an execution after, you know, normally talk about late-term. His wasn't late-term, this was -- the baby was born and then you can execute the baby. That's the Democrats and that's Biden.
Joe Biden

life hes

thats Biden

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:04:06 - 00:04:23 (17 sec)

Talk to me for a moment. John Bolton's making a lot of headlines this morning about claiming that you spoke with Presidency Xi and were willing to pleaded with him to help in your reelection and that you approved these concentration camps in China.
John Bolton

John Boltons

lot of headlines

concentration camps

Negative

Donald Trump

00:04:23 - 00:04:23 (1 sec)

Yeah. First of all --
Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:04:23 - 00:04:24 (0 sec)

Speak to that.
Neutral

Donald Trump

00:04:24 - 00:04:57 (33 sec)

I don't plead with anybody and he knows that he's a lying guy. He was a washed-up guy. I gave him a chance. He couldn't get confirmed by the Senate. I gave him a nonconformity, an

area where you don't have to go through the Senate. And then he goes out and writes a book. Uh, he, the book is, is a total lie, but more importantly or mostly a lie, more importantly, what he did is illegal. It's classified information. And I think number one, we're going to get back for the government, the money, any money that he made. And number two, I think he's got very major problems. He violated the law. Let's see what happened. You watch.
anybody

Senate

number

classified information

major problems

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:04:57 - 00:05:00 (3 sec)

Well, and Mulvaney came up and said this was fiction.
Mulvaney

fiction

Positive

Donald Trump

00:05:00 - 00:05:43 (43 sec)

Mick Mulvaney was great and Mnuchin was great. And if you look at, uh, our great secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, he was great. Everybody was in the room and nobody heard what Bolton heard. And why would I do that? China has never met a person in this office. That's treated them the way I do. Never. We've taken in tens of billions of dollars from China. They've never had a situation like this. Before the pandemic, which probably was sent by them, whether it was accidental or on purpose, we'll figure that out. But before this horror show that all these 188 countries are going through, China was having the worst year in 67 years.
Mick Mulvaney

horror show

great secretary of state

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:05:43 - 00:05:43 (1 sec)

Right.
Neutral

Donald Trump

00:05:43 - 00:06:02 (19 sec)

That's me. That's because of me. Because with any of these people, if you take a look, what happened with Biden and Obama, China ripped this country, like it's never been ripped before and that'll go back. If Biden won, China would own the United States, they would literally own the United States. You know it. And so do I.
China

United States

people

Biden

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:06:02 - 00:06:16 (14 sec)

Let's talk for a moment about these mail-in ballots. There are calls across the country. I read where Michigan has already sent in mail-in-ballot requests to older voters. What can you do about this? You -- you believe this will promote or encourage fraud?
Michigan

ballot requests

older voters

Positive

Donald Trump

00:06:16 - 00:06:45 (29 sec)

I think it's going to be the greatest fraud ever. I think it's going to be, uh, a rigged election if they do that, if they're allowed to do it. We went through World War I and World War II, people went out and voted. And now they're saying the pademic -- pandemic, they're using that as an excuse. The news is building it up like crazy. Mail-in ballots, you're going to have foreign countries, you talk about foreign countries, they're going to be printing their own ballots. It will be a rigged election if they do that. Now, we're suing on many different states.
foreign countries

World War

World War II

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:06:45 - 00:06:46 (1 sec)

Right.
Neutral

Donald Trump

00:06:46 - 00:07:25 (39 sec)

And we're having great luck, we're winning some of these suits. Uh, we're going to see what happens. If we go to mail-in ballots, they're going to take them out of the mailboxes. They're going to take them from postmen. They're going to print them fraudulently and foreign countries are going to print them. California has just announced. They're sending out millions and millions of ballots. Where are they going, Raymond? Where are these ballots going? Who are they going to? And then maybe they don't send to a Republican neighborhood. You take a look, we had seven races in California at the end, house races. Everybody was close. And then in the end we lost, they dumped a whole pile of ballots on tables, but we won the big one. We won the one just recently.
California

foreign countries

whole pile of ballots

ballots

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:07:25 - 00:07:26 (0 sec)

All right.
Positive

Donald Trump

00:07:26 - 00:07:39 (14 sec)

And, uh, first time in 22 years, I think really good things are happening. People are seeing what's happening, but mail-in ballots will lead to the greatest rigged election and the greatest fraud in the history of our country, potentially.
22 years

first time

greatest rigged election

good things

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:07:39 - 00:07:53 (13 sec)

We have to talk about police reform. This is at the top of every headline. It's bound up in the protests we've been seeing. Do you support it, and it's spreading around Capitol Hill, the idea of ending qualified immunity for cops.
police reform

Capitol Hill

bound up

Negative

Donald Trump

00:07:53 - 00:08:13 (21 sec)

No look, we're going to have to let our police -- Number one, we need great people. We have great people. You'll see one person, but you won't see thousands of people that do a great job. Police, law enforcement. We have the greatest law enforcement in the world. We have to protect them. If you do anything with immunity, nobody's going to be able to do their job. So, no, I don't support it at all.
great people

immunity

law enforcement

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:08:13 - 00:08:28 (15 sec)

After all we've seen, the tumult of the last few weeks, how do you bring this country together? And how do you get black Americans to listen to new? They were leaning in and listening to what Donald Trump was saying and doing. How do you get them to give you a second look?
black Americans

Donald Trump

second look

Negative

Donald Trump

00:08:28 - 00:08:37 (8 sec)

Well, it's a shame that I have to even ask that because I did criminal justice reform. I did opportunities zones. I funded the black colleges as you know --
shame

black colleges

criminal justice reform

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:08:37 - 00:08:37 (1 sec)

First president to do that.
First president

Neutral

Donald Trump

00:08:37 - 00:09:15 (38 sec)

-- the universities, I funded it and they have long-term financing. Nobody else did it. Obama didn't do it. Nobody did it. I did more for -- I say it and I say it openly, I did more for our black population than anybody other than Abraham Lincoln, OK? And nobody's even close. What I did on criminal justice reform. They've been trying to get it for years and nobody did it. Obama didn't do it, I did it. And it's a shame you have to say that because to be honest with you, Raymond, they should say, we love Trump. And I think a lot do, I think a lot of African-American, great people in this country, they appreciate what I've done. We'll soon find out.
Obama didnt

great people

black population

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:09:15 - 00:09:25 (10 sec)

What is your opinion and how do you deal with these states that are refusing to open up Mr. President? Is there anything you can do? Refuse them funding, withhold funding, unless they open up.
opinion

Mr. President

states

Negative

Donald Trump

00:09:25 - 00:09:42 (17 sec)

A lot of it is a thing for November 3rd because the longer they hold out, they think it hurts the economy and it hurts the economy that's good for them, but our economy, we just had record job numbers two weeks ago. We had record retail sales numbers last week. I think we're going to do very well, we're doing very well.
two weeks

November 3rd

economy thats

lot

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:09:42 - 00:10:02 (20 sec)

Archbishop Vigano wrote you a letter that you tweeted out. He was the former Nuncio Vatican representative here in Washington. In it, he said, what you're facing is a battle of the children of the light versus the children of darkness. He said these protests were infernal deceptions. How did you react to that letter? He asked people to pray for you. And is that an accurate read of where we are?
Vigano

former Nuncio Vatican

Archbishop Vigano

youre facing

Negative

Donald Trump

00:10:02 - 00:10:18 (16 sec)

I -- I think it is. And I think he is a great gentleman and I really -- it was a tremendous letter of support from the Catholic church. Uh, he's highly respected as you know. It was beautiful. It was really three pages long and it was a beautiful letter and I appreciated it. Yeah. But he's right in what he says.
Catholic church

great gentleman

tremendous letter of support

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:10:18 - 00:10:24 (6 sec)

Final question. How do you want to be remembered by the next generation and how do you get there?
question

Final question

next generation

Positive

Donald Trump

00:10:24 - 00:11:10 (46 sec)

So I was there three months ago. We had the greatest economy ever. The greatest job numbers, great -- for everybody, for women, for African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-Americans, people without high-school diploma, there's so many categories, every single category. And then we got hit with the plague from China, and now I'm doing it again. And next year we're going to have a phenomenal economic year, one of the best. Joe Biden and the Democrats want to prosecute Americans for going to church, but not for burning a church. Believe you can riot, vandalize, and destroy, but you cannot attend a peaceful pro-America rally.
three months

plague

greatest economy

greatest job numbers

Joe Biden

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:11:10 - 00:11:16 (6 sec)

They're nipping at you over attendance at this Tulsa rally. What really happened there in your opinion?
Tulsa

Tulsa rally

attendance

opinion

Negative

Donald Trump

00:11:16 - 00:11:22 (6 sec)

Well, there were many things. First of all, there was a curfew that was enforced the first night where many people had to leave.
curfew

first night

people

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:11:22 - 00:11:56 (34 sec)

Right. And it was, you know, enforced by the mayor where many people the first night, meaning a couple of nights out, they had to leave. They'd been waiting there and then all of a sudden they're forced out, but there were many things that happened, including protesters, including Black Lives Matter, including, uh, probably Antifa, we'll find out, because they're looking at it now, they had protestors. And also for two weeks, we have been hammered that if you walk into that arena, you're going to be in big trouble, big, big, big trouble. And you know, we had a good crowd.
two weeks

Black Lives Matter

sudden theyre

first night

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:11:56 - 00:11:57 (1 sec)

Oh yeah, no, you did.
Positive

Donald Trump

00:11:57 - 00:12:10 (12 sec)

I'll tell you right now, if you look at that, that was a lot of people. It was a 22,000 seat place. And if you have, I mean, we had a lot of people in there and what they don't say is online was phenomenal numbers.
lot of people

seat place

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:12:10 - 00:12:12 (2 sec)

Right. And the broadcast network's huge.

broadcast

Positive

Donald Trump

00:12:12 - 00:12:14 (2 sec)

I heard the television network did fantastic.
television network

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:12:14 - 00:12:23 (9 sec)

I don't know any politician or a standup comedian who holds forth for two hours with the energy and verve that you brought, including the leather shoe which was classic.
two hours

standup comedian

politician

hours

Positive

Donald Trump

00:12:23 - 00:12:28 (5 sec)

The leather shoes, that's right, I have them again. They're leather shoes, but they're not meant for an ice-skating rink.
Theyre leather shoes

leather shoes

ice-skating rink

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:12:28 - 00:12:30 (2 sec)

No. Don't do that. Don't do that.
Dont

Negative

Donald Trump

00:12:30 - 00:12:31 (0 sec)

No. I won't do that.
wont

Negative

Raymond Arroyo

00:12:31 - 00:12:31 (1 sec)

Mr. President.
Mr. President

Neutral

Donald Trump

00:12:31 - 00:12:32 (1 sec)

Have a good time. Thank you very much.
good time

Positive

Raymond Arroyo

00:12:32 - 00:12:33 (0 sec)

Thank you.
Positive

'Is This Really Happening?': The Siege of Congress, Seen From the Inside

politico.com/news/magazine/2021/01/07/capitol-storming-siege-congress-inside-first-person-oral-history-455715

Burgess Everett, *Co-Congressional Bureau Chief*: We were in our little gallery, which is right across from the Senate chamber. We started to see videos on Twitter of protesters outside the building, kind of overrunning the police, or trying to. And, you know, that was a little unsettling. So, I got up, and I walked around [the third floor]. I kind of looked out the windows to see what was happening, and I was noticing that there were a lot of people. There's a very strict fence that surrounds the perimeter of where you can go and where you can't go. And I noticed that all of a sudden there were hundreds of people just milling around in places they shouldn't be.

Stephen Voss, *photographer*: I arrived at the Capitol's west side. I was there only 10 minutes before I started seeing people using the metal barricades to push toward the Capitol. At 2:04, the Capitol Police were spraying pepper spray toward the crowd and the crowd was fighting back. One rioter also sprayed the police with pepper spray.



Stephen Voss for Politico

Tina Nguyen, *White House reporter*: I was standing near the intersection of Delaware and Constitution. You could see a big throng of MAGA supporters approaching from several blocks away. The police said to people there to keep moving along, and the crowd, who earlier in the day were thanking the police, started saying things like, "Just disobey! Just disobey." It was clear they wanted to occupy the building.

Sarah Ferris, *Congress reporter*: I was sitting in the House press gallery, just steps from the chamber, when the texts began to come in. The Madison building, a tiny corner of the Capitol complex, was evacuated. Then the police were sprinting down the halls of Cannon, banging on doors to get staff out.

Olivia Beavers, *Congress reporter*: Suddenly all these sources were reaching out to us. We were getting texts, emails, tweets, Signal, all the platforms, that there were all these threats—a potential bomb at the Library of Congress, a suspicious package.

Melanie Zanona, *Congress reporter*: The gallery staff started telling us, "We're hearing we might have to go into lockdown. If that's the case, we're going to have to lock the doors and escort you to inside the chamber." There's a balcony that overlooks the House floor. They told us if we do go into lockdown, we're all going to go on the balcony, take your snacks, take your cellphones. We might be there a long time if we do have to go into lockdown, so bring all the things you need. They also told us where the escape hoods were located.



Stephen Voss for Politico

Stephen Voss *[outside]*: The police were getting it hard; they didn't have a lot of equipment. I saw one policewoman who had no helmet, no shield, no baton. She'd been sprayed in the face with pepper spray and she looked like she was in agony but she was holding her ground. Rioters kept running toward the police. I watched this for about 40 minutes. When some of the rioters would get hit with pepper spray, they'd fall back and others would shout, "We need more people on the line." It was an all-out battle for a while with a lot of pepper spray in the air. The police had very few gas masks.

It's a day that will live in infamy. Rioters incited by President Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday in an attempt to overturn the results of the November election.

Sarah Ferris: Mid-bite of my lunch, House gallery staff — increasingly frantic themselves —warned us to get away from windows. We all moved, but within minutes, we were moving again. This time, into the House chamber—laptop,

Sarah Ferris: Amid a discussion of Arizona's Electoral College votes, a Capitol Police official rushed to take the dais and issued a warning: "We had a breach."

Daniel Lippman, *White House reporter [outside]:*

I heard that the Capitol was breached. I saw some protesters start jogging toward the Capitol saying they wanted to join the action.

Olivia Beavers: I've covered protests. I've seen mob mentality snowball. But this was snowballing into something else. The next thing I see is a tweet that there were protesters in the Senate.

Daniel Lippman: I knew things were getting bad when I saw DHS Federal Protective Service cars racing down Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Capitol.

Burgess Everett *[on the Senate side of the building]*: At that point, the Senate debate is going on—the certification there. Republicans are arguing with each other. And I'm kind of monitoring that in the back of my head as I mill around. And then

Burgess Everett: You could see [on TV] that the senators were being told, "You guys gotta get out of here." So, if you could sort of see that things were disrupted, if that makes sense,

Stephen Voss: Some in the crowd were on the west side of the Capitol were throwing water bottles. I saw one policeman holding a pepper-spray gun while blood ran down his cheek. I saw rioters on the north side of the

II. "This is really escalating"

With rio now run uncontr inside pc of the Ca building. news bri both chamber a halt. congress leaders c whisked away.

wallet, car keys and my undrunk cup of coffee all left behind.

basically what happened was that the debate stopped, the camera cut off, and everybody just left the floor.

that something was wrong. And then the feed just cut off.

Capitol climbing a wall toward an elevated walkway that would give them access to a door to the Capitol.



Drew Angerer/Getty Images

Olivia Beavers: We're still in the press gallery and we're seeing alerts. This is inching up close to us.

Sarah Ferris: At one point, I saw a group of officials pull House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer and House Majority Whip Clyburn from the floor in a quick flurry.

Olivia Beavers: Then a House press gallery staffer ran up behind us and locked the doors.

Marianne LeVine, *Senate reporter*: Then there was an announcement the building wasn't secure. Intercom, probably Capitol Police. We decided to barricade the doors with couches and chairs. We turned off the lights and we hid behind the desks.

Marianne LeVine: We started hearing noise. We could hear they'd gone into the Capitol. We heard a lot of stampeding and cheers and people. We could hear chants of, "Four more years!" and all that.

Burgess Everett: We could hear people shaking the walls. At this point, people are on the Senate floor and all over the Capitol that shouldn't be. We don't even know this because we turned everything off because we're trying to make it seem like nobody is in this room. We don't know who the heck is in there. ... I just heard banging and yelling, and police screaming and radio. I mean, it just sounded like bedlam.

Stephen Voss: On the north side of the Capitol is a security door. It was very chaotic there. About a dozen rioters had forced themselves through the door but then were pepper sprayed and pushed out; they fell on top of each other in a pile. The Capitol Police tried to close the door, but a rioter had jammed a flagpole into the top of the door to keep it open. The police kept trying to close the door and eventually bent the flagpole. This went on for about 45 minutes. At one point the rioters used a metal barricade to try to ram the door. The door glass eventually broke but the police managed to keep the rioters out.



Stephen Voss for Politico

Olivia Beavers: That's when you notice this sizable shift on the floor below, especially on the Democratic side, which I could see more clearly because I was closer, that, "Oh sh--, something is going on."

Sarah Ferris: Hundreds of lawmakers, who had been seated on the floor or in the upper galleries, began turning to whisper to each other, some raising their voice as they asked what was going on, others frantically checking their phones.

Olivia Beavers: What we could see was the looks on the faces of the members: "Is this really happening?"



Andrew Harnik/AP Photo

Melanie Zanona: Members started to get loud, they were talking to each other, they were starting to kind of go at each other. One member at one point, a Democrat, Steve Cohen, yelled over towards the Republican side of the room and said, "Call Trump and tell him to call this off." And then a little bit later on, a lawmaker sitting on the Republican side shot back and said something along the lines of, "I bet you liberals are glad now you didn't defund the police." And he then said, "Let's hear it for the Capitol Police." Got a few people to start clapping.

Sarah Ferris: We were also told tear gas has been dispersed, spurring another flurry on the floor as staff sprinted to start distributing the escape hoods that Congress ordered as an emergency precaution after 9/11.

Olivia Beavers: We're watching members take out these gas masks and you can hear the crumpling sound of the wrapping.

Melanie Zanona: And the Capitol Police officer said there's protesters [in Statuary Hall], tear gas has been dispersed. And he started advising everyone where the escape hoods were located up in the gallery. The gallery staff started then passing out—there were these big black duffel bags, and they started taking out these escape hoods. They were contained in this foil, wrapped up in this foil. It was like a double package.

Olivia Beavers: Congressman [Ruben] Gallego stood up on a chair and told people to stay calm and take deep breaths or they'd pass out.

Melanie Zanona: When they were passing out the escape hoods on the balcony, the Capitol police officer was like, OK, everyone, you know, put on your hoods and then someone else got on the microphone. I think it was the new chaplain, who's a female, but a female voice did get on the microphone and said, "Let's pray," and started praying as all the members and staffers and everyone is putting on these escape hoods, preparing to be evacuated. She said a prayer.

Olivia Beavers: They're getting evacuated. This is really escalating.

Melanie Zanona: And then a police officer is like, "OK, everyone, follow me." The way the balconies are set up, it's like they're sectioned off. So we have to climb over these gold railings.

Olivia Beavers: As I'm climbing over one railing, this police officer yelled at us to take cover and duck.

Olivia Beavers: There was a moment when a reporter asked me: "Do you think we should take off our press badges?" I said, No.

Sarah Ferris: Police eventually started to quickly evacuate large groups of members from the floor. They started on the Republican side, and I watched them run to the exit. Then it was our turn in the gallery, with staff shouting for press to start making their way toward a door across the chamber—a maneuver that would require climbing over seats and railings in the most high stress of times. One older reporter stumbled as she tried to climb, breathing heavily as we helped her across.

Sarah Ferris: I climbed over several rows of chairs, landing in the very front where I could duck behind a short railing. Above me, I saw Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, who recently had hip surgery and has been walking with a cane, and I realized she couldn't get down to the front, so I shuffled a bit and made room for her.

Sarah Ferris: The chamber below us was now virtually empty. The remaining members and press were now lumped together in the upper gallery.

Melanie Zanona: There were members who were calling their loved ones. It was just a very scary few minutes there.

Sarah Ferris: Beside us, I heard a loud, desperate prayer from Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester. She gripped hands with Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, who was nearly sprawled onto the floor between two seats, and Congresswoman Val Demings, who sat on the other side.

Melanie Zanona: And so police officers put a big wooden credenza in front of the door and created a barricade and they drew their guns. And we heard just like bang, bang, bang on the doors. We didn't know what it was at that point.



AP Photo/Andrew Harnik

Sarah Ferris: We heard bangs on the main chamber floor outside, then what sounded like gunshots.

Melanie Zanona: The other police officers where we were up in the balcony said everyone duck for cover. And so I had my hood up. Some people had their hoods on. Some didn't. I had my hood on. I was just crouched behind a chair up in the balcony. Next to another reporter, just like holding each other's hands and just crouched waiting there. And I heard what sounded like a gunshot.

Sarah Ferris: A hundred feet in front of us, a half-dozen police officers armed only with handguns stood in front of what looked like a large piece of furniture that had been pushed in front of the main chamber door. I cannot overstate how terrified we all were, not knowing what was coming next.

Olivia Beavers: I had this really clear shot of the police with their guns drawn pointed at these holes in the glass. I had a perfect view of the protesters trying to get in. You could tell there were people on the other side [of the door] but you couldn't see them.

Sarah Ferris: Glass broke, more banging. Then, there was knocking on the enormous, solid wood door up in our gallery. Police yelled to confirm their identity, then opened it and finally started allowing us to evacuate.

Olivia Beavers: My hands were starting to shake. I reached for my backpack. I wanted something for an extra barrier on my back or stomach in case shots were fired.

Melanie Zanona: I think like 10 minutes maybe went by and they were like, "OK, now we are going to evacuate you from this door." And then someone was banging on that door and we didn't know who it was. And they're like, "Oh, no, it's another police officer trying to come get you guys." And then there's like this moment of confusion where it was like, "How do we know who's on the other side of the door?" And some people were like, "Don't open it," and some people were like, "Figure out who it is." I don't know how they figured out it was a good guy. They did, and they opened the door and it was other police officers. And at that point, we were escorted out of the chamber, out of the balcony.

Tina Nguyen: On the west side of the Capitol, a rumor ripped through the crowd that someone had been shot. I heard some people around me saying, "Someone got shot, we're going to stay here." It seemed like they were celebrating that someone got in that far into the Capitol that they'd been shot.

III. "On the east side of the Capitol, there was a pitched battle"

With the outside world now aware that Congress has shut down and watching in shock, authorities debate how to regain control of the building and whether the National Guard should be deployed. Inside, legislators are taken through passages; others shelter where they can. Many people will remain trapped in the Capitol, while the building is swept for explosives and other threats.



Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images

Burgess Everett: We basically waited to stop hearing people yelling. And then we waited for police to come. And they came once, and it was clear they were still looking to clear people out of the building. And we could still hear people in the building. And we waited about 20 more minutes. Another police officer came and told us, "Things are clearing up on the Senate side, but you should still stay in here." So we stayed in there a bit longer.

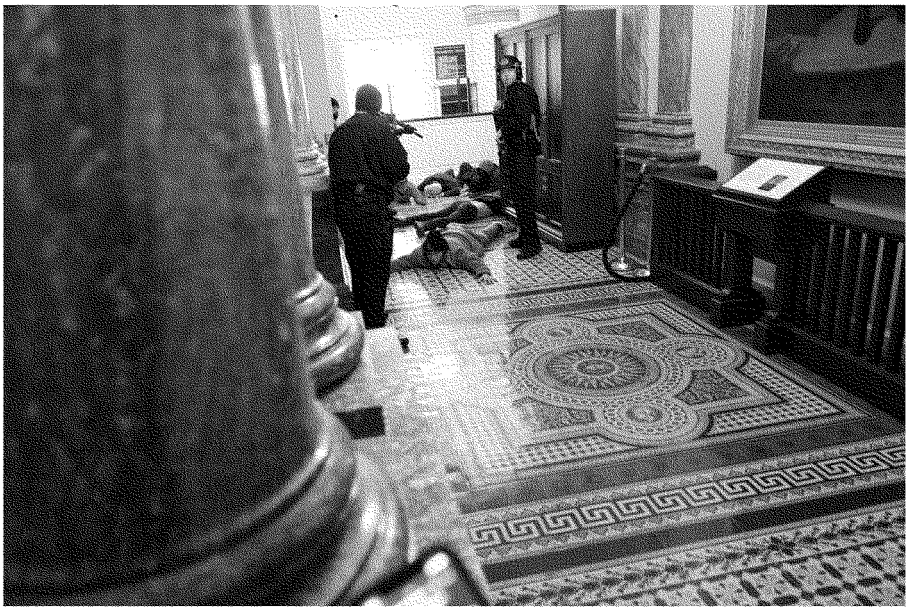
Marianne LeVine: We heard a lot of banging when the protesters entered the chamber. We were in there for probably about an hour, waiting to figure out what was going on. Eventually, the noise started going away. A police officer came to our door and told us to keep the door closed. It started to get quiet.

Marianne LeVine: It sounded like a lot of banging, cheering, stampeding. It sounded like people were coming up and down the steps, that kind of thing.

Burgess Everett: *[He evacuated shortly after the senators .]* We started walking down the stairs, and I started seeing what the Capitol looked like. And there was, on the first floor, just tear gas and smoke hanging in the air. And the officers told me to cover my mouth, and I started coughing. ... It was like a riot scene on the first floor of the Capitol. ... You could look out the window and see that the rioters are still outside and they're trying to get in, and police are barricading the door. It was very chaotic.

Marianne LeVine: It was just silence and it felt like we were alone. We really had no information from the police. We were shut out from the rest of the world.

Melanie Zanona: As we're [evacuating from the House]—so this is the third floor of the building where we are as we're doing this—I looked and saw at least three protesters who were lying on the floor, restrained. I couldn't really tell if they had handcuffs or zip ties or whatever, but they were definitely lying on the floor and not moving.



AP Photo/Andrew Harnik

Olivia Beavers: Congresswoman [Norma] Torres comforted me, and we told each other we were going to get through this.

Melanie Zanona: At one point, this one member, Rosa DeLauro, reached over and touched my back and said, "Are you OK?" And I said, "Yeah, I'm fine—you know, holding it in."

Olivia Beavers: It wasn't clear where we were going.

Sarah Ferris: We were being led through a hallway, down stairs, through a maze of hallways that I should have recognized from my six years on Capitol Hill but didn't.

Olivia Beavers: Walking down the stairs, that's when the shakes began to hit my body. We were a couple of flights down and my legs started to go. I was trying to ask members: "Were there gunshots?"

Sarah Ferris: Packed into a back staircase, descending deeper into the Capitol, I heard Congresswoman Terri Sewell ask, "Does anyone know where we are going?" Nearby, Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger shouted down, "Is there a Capitol police officer leading us?"

This week from Politico Magazine

Melanie Zanona: Mike Quigley, of Illinois, tried to bring a little levity to the situation, and he looked over at one of the new members. I don't know who the freshman was, but kind of made a joke: *Welcome to Congress*. You know, just making note of how absolutely insane the situation was.

Olivia Beavers: We were ushered to a safe room. I got to the door and I was stopped by an officer. "No reporters allowed in." Abigail Spanberger was next to me. She said, "What do you mean? They're being evacuated with us." But they wouldn't let us in. That's when a member stepped forward and said he'd take six of us to his office. He had experience in the military and he was very calm.

Stephen Voss: On the east side of the Capitol, there was a pitched battle with more rioters trying to get in. One door was already smashed and some of the rioters were hanging out inside the entrance. Others were using flagpoles to hit the doors but I didn't see other weapons.

Marianne LeVine: We had the door locked. We heard them banging like they were getting close to us. We thought [it was the rioters]. We heard lots of banging on the door. We thought maybe it was one of the [rioters] who made it up. Eventually someone came and escorted us. I don't know how many police officers. Maybe 20. There were SWAT officers.



Stephen Voss for Politico

Stephen Voss: There's an area that TV crews use to film stand-ups with the Capitol in the background; earlier in the day I'd seen reporters there. But now the crowds were attacking the equipment cases, trying to destroy it. One guy was live-streaming as the equipment was being smashed and he said several times, "This is the end of legacy media."

The need to reckon with Trump's lies

washingtonpost.com/world/2021/01/11/trump-lies-capitol-mob-analysis/

By Ishaan Tharoor

January 11, 2021



You're reading an excerpt from the Today's WorldView newsletter. ***Sign up to get the rest****, including news from around the globe, interesting ideas and opinions to know, sent to your inbox every weekday.*

For much of President Trump's time in power, observers and journalists have struggled with how to characterize his lying. It's sometimes hard to tell whether when spouting falsehoods, he knowingly mauled the truth.News organizations fact-checked Trump, called out his misleading claims and exaggerations, and catalogued the many thousands of falsehoods he propagated while holding the highest office in the land. But Trump carried on, insulated by a right-wing echo chamber and impervious to criticism.

Lies — a mendacity both calculated and weaponized — were always at the heart of the Trump presidency. His political career was launched with a lie about the place of former president Barack Obama's birth, intended to delegitimize the country's first Black president. And it may now be drawing to an end with an evidently dangerous set of lies about the election he lost and the capacity of his hardcore supporters to overturn the result.

Washington is still floundering in the aftermath of the failed but deadly attack Wednesday that saw a mob of Trump supporters attempt to storm the Capitol and stop lawmakers from certifying President-elect Joe Biden's victory. It's obvious that Trump played a role in stirring up the acts of insurrection, arguably along with a coterie of prominent Republican officials who pandered to the mob's misguided rage.

Yet Trump's campaign of incitement didn't begin last week. It has coursed through his presidency: He has stoked polarization and demonized political opponents with a cavalcade of lies aimed at channeling the anxieties of his base. Experts pointed to the authoritarian, even fascist, character of his politics, which was so tightly wound around loyalty to Trump himself and an almost apocalyptic worldview that warned of enemies plotting American ruin abroad and within.

"Like many other populist leaders — including Hungary's Viktor Orban, India's Narendra Modi, the Philippines's Rodrigo Duterte, and Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro — Trump has an us-versus-them mentality," wrote Harvard University political scientist Pippa Norris. "As he sees it, when defending 'us' against the existential threat of 'them,' nearly everything is justified."

"Our big lie is typically American, wrapped in our odd electoral system, depending upon our particular traditions of racism," wrote Timothy Snyder, a historian at Yale University. "Yet our big lie is also structurally fascist, with its extreme mendacity, its conspiratorial thinking, its reversal of perpetrators and victims and its implication that the world is divided into us and them. To keep it going for four years courts terrorism and assassination."

It's no surprise that the kindling Trump helped pile onto the American political landscape took spark. "What makes such movements turn violent," my colleagues wrote in a piece that linked the radicalization of those who stormed the Capitol to that of violent extremist movements around the world, "is the additional belief that some other entity — usually based on race, religion, or nationality — is to blame for perceived humiliation."

"Trump played on and amplified these messages," Cindy Storer, a former CIA counterterrorism analyst, explained to my colleagues.

The thorny question is what consequences the president should face. Some House Democrats are preparing for an unprecedented second round of impeachment proceedings for the president. "Absent a resignation or a move by Vice President Pence to lead the invoking of the 25th Amendment, for which Pence shows no stomach, impeachment proceedings could be on a fast-track," wrote my colleague Dan Balz. "In just a few days, the idea of impeachment has gone from preliminary conversations to the prospect of possible floor action early next week, if Trump has not resigned."

It's doubtful, though, that such a maneuver would get any traction in the Senate before Trump's term expires. And beyond Trump, there is an entire ecosystem of right-wing disinformation that proliferates. Polling last week before the attack on the Capitol found that significant numbers of Republicans doubted the results of the election. Polling in the aftermath showed that many Republicans — if not a majority — approved of the storming of the Capitol.

Tech companies whose social media platforms gave oxygen to years of Trumpist grievance and conspiracy theories have also started to take action. Trump's Twitter feed — the giant, defining megaphone of his presidency — was suspended permanently last week. Google, Apple and Amazon all took steps to limit or disable the use of right-wing messaging app Parler on the grounds that its insufficient content moderation policies failed to stop people like the pro-Trump rioters from spreading hate and voicing plans for violence.

Critics on the left have been calling for such measures for months, but, for the American right, these moves are evidence of a supposed big-tech conspiracy against conservatives. Analysts suggest that feelings of martyrdom and persecution may fuel the next phase of Republican politics.

Yet even some senior Republicans say a more honest accounting of what brought the country to this moment needs to take place. "It all started with lies, and lies, and lies, and intolerance," former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger said in a video message, in which he spoke of his own upbringing in guilt-ridden Austria in the years after World War II. "So being from Europe, I've seen firsthand how things can spin out of control."

In an op-ed for Politico, Thierry Breton, a top European Union official, pointed to the untenability of allowing private tech companies to be the gatekeepers of political speech. But the United States, given its First Amendment protections, isn't on the verge of copying some of the stricter regulations around hate speech codified in many European countries.

"Last week's insurrection marked the culminating point of years of hate speech, incitement to violence, disinformation and destabilization strategies that were allowed to spread without restraint over well-known social networks," wrote Breton. "The unrest in Washington is proof that a powerful yet unregulated digital space — reminiscent of the Wild West — has a profound impact on the very foundations of our modern democracies."

Read more:

The end of the road for American exceptionalism

Trump's bitter fight and the fragility of U.S. democracy

The awkward timing of Europe's deal with China

Clyburn's Ipad, Laptop From Pelosi's Office: Items Stolen, Destroyed In Capitol Attack

forbes.com/sites/jackbrewster/2021/01/08/clyburns-ipad-laptop-from-pelosis-office-items-stolen-destroyed-in-capitol-attack/

January 8, 2021



Election 2020|Jan 8, 2021,01:00pm EST|
Updated Jan 7, 2021, 12:14pm EST

Topline

Along with shutting down the proceedings of the U.S. Congress and forcing lawmakers to flee to safety during an important vote on the presidential election, the pro-Trump mob that stormed through the Capitol on Wednesday stole equipment, ripped down signs and damaged property—brazen actions they could be prosecuted for, many of which were caught on camera.

WASHINGTON, DC - JANUARY 06: A pro-Trump protester carries the lectern of U.S. Speaker of the House ... [+] Nancy Pelosi through the Roturnda of the U.S. Capitol Building after a pro-Trump mob stormed the building on January 06, 2021 in Washington, DC. Congress held a joint session today to ratify President-elect Joe Biden's 306-232 Electoral College win over President Donald Trump. A group of Republican senators said they would reject the Electoral College votes of several states unless Congress appointed a commission to audit the election results. (Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images)
Getty Images

Key Facts

In a photo snapped by Getty Images, an unidentified vandal wearing a "Trump" ski cap appeared to steal House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-Calif.) podium, all while smiling and waving at the camera.

Trump supporters took over House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office, upending tables, ripping down pictures, and removing a sign posted by the entrance to be used as a "trophy," according to the *New York Times*; computers in Pelosi's office may have been compromised.

Pelosi spokesperson Drew Hammill tweeted that a laptop "only used for presentations" had been stolen from the speaker's conference room, while House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn told reporters his iPad was stolen.

"Items, electronic items were stolen from senators' offices, documents and materials were stolen," Michael Sherwin, U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, said Thursday.

Richard Barnett, 60, from Gravette, Arkansas, posed for the *New York Times* with a note stolen from Pelosi's office, saying he didn't steal it because he "left a quarter" on Pelosi's desk.

As they attempted to break inside the Capitol, crowds of Trump supporters shattered windows all across the Capitol in footage caught on tape

In a video posted to Twitter, Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) said rioters "smashed the door" of his office "virtually off its hinges," stole a laptop, "tore things off the walls," stole a laptop off a conference table and trashed the room.

The office of the Senate parliamentarian was raided with papers strewn across the ground, according to footage captured by CNN:

A John Lewis "shrine" was "destroyed" in House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer's (D-Md.) office, Hoyer said in a tweet Thursday.

Outside the Capitol, a group of Associated Press reporters were chased from their camera equipment by rioters, prompting a crowd to then destroy it.

Forbes has reached out to Pelosi's office and the Capitol police about the extent of the damage.

Not So Big Number

52. That's how many people have been arrested as of 9:30 p.m. EST Wednesday, according to D.C. police.

Tangent

A photo of Barnett sitting in Pelosi's office went viral on Wednesday.

What To Watch For

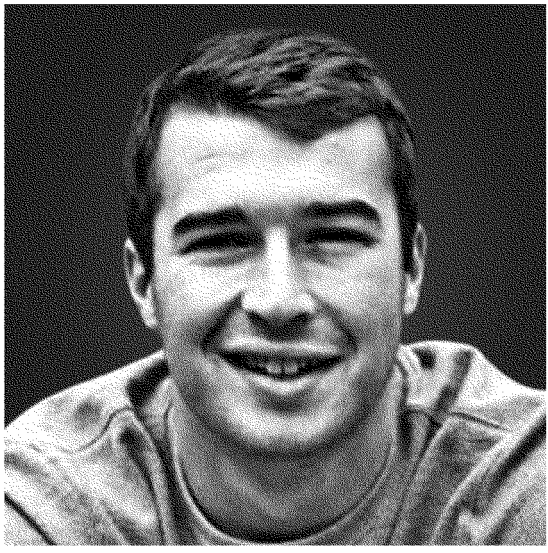
D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser did not say whether rioters would be arrested if they stayed out past the mandated 6 p.m. EST curfew on Wednesday in an interview with CNN. At the Capitol, trespassers have been told they must leave by 6 p.m. or be arrested, according to Politico.

Crucial Quote

"Electoral College ballots rescued from the Senate floor," Sen. Merkley said on Twitter. "If our capable floor staff hadn't grabbed them, they would have been burned by the mob."

Further Reading

Capitol Hill Mob Accessed Congressional Computers — 'Consider Them All Compromised' (Forbes)



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I cover national politics for Forbes. Previously, I've written for TIME, Newsweek, the New York Daily News and VICE News. I also launched my own startup, Newsreel, a

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Andrew Solender
I am a news reporter covering politics and the Biden transition. I have previously worked for MSNBC and Chronogram Magazine. I attended Vassar College and the London

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Police Confirm Death Of Officer Injured During Attack On Capitol

npr.org/sections/insurrection-at-the-capitol/2021/01/07/954333542/police-confirm-death-of-officer-injured-during-attack-on-capitol

Police Confirm Death Of Officer Injured During Attack On Capitol

January 7, 20218:02 AM ET

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Enlarge this image
U.S. Capitol police officers make their way through pro-Trump extremists who stormed the Capitol building on Wednesday. **Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images hide caption**

toggle caption
Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images



U.S. Capitol police officers make their way through pro-Trump extremists who stormed the Capitol building on Wednesday.

Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images

Updated Friday at 12:05 a.m. ET

U.S. Capitol Police announced late Thursday that an officer hurt during this week's violent assault on the chambers of Congress by protesters loyal to President Trump has died from his injuries.

"At approximately 9:30 p.m. this evening (January 7, 2021), United States Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick passed away due to injuries sustained while on-duty," a statement from the U.S. Capitol Police said.

"Officer Sicknick was responding to the riots on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, at the U.S. Capitol and was injured while physically engaging with protesters. He returned to his division office and collapsed."

The statement said that Sicknick had been taken to a local hospital and that his death will be investigated by the Metropolitan Police Department's Homicide Branch, the U.S. Capitol Police and "our federal partners."

The confirmation follows an earlier, premature report that the officer had died, which NPR incorrectly reported based on information from a well-placed source.



More than 50 criminal cases are being opened against pro-Trump extremists who engaged in violence during the breach of the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday.

In addition to invading the House and Senate chambers, driving members of Congress into hiding, the extremists attacked police "with metal pipes, discharged chemical irritants, and took up other weapons against our officers," U.S. Capitol Police said Thursday.

In a call with reporters, the acting U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, Michael Sherwin, didn't rule out charges of rioting, insurrection and seditious conspiracy.

Forty local cases had been filed with the D.C. Superior Court concerning entry to the Capitol, assault and possession of a firearm.



Enlarge this image

Pro-Trump extremists stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday and quickly overran unprepared U.S. Capitol Police officers on the scene. Lawmakers and other staffers had to be evacuated after rioters breached the building. **Olivier Douliery/AFP via Getty Images hide caption**

toggle caption
Olivier Douliery/AFP via Getty Images



Pro-Trump extremists stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday and quickly overran unprepared U.S. Capitol Police officers on the scene. Lawmakers and other staffers had to be evacuated after rioters breached the building.

Olivier Douliery/AFP via Getty Images
On the federal level, 15 cases have been filed against people accused of illegally entering the Capitol, possessing a firearm or stealing congressional property.

One person was said to have been carrying a semiautomatic rifle and 11 Molotov cocktails when they were arrested.

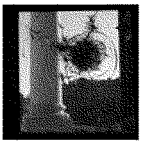
Sherwin said theft of congressional property could impact national security.

"Electronic items were stolen from senators' offices. Documents, materials were stolen, and we have to identify what was done, mitigate that, and it could have potential national security equities," Sherwin said.

"If there was damage, we don't know the extent of that yet," he added.

Sherwin said he could not provide information on who was responsible for the two improvised explosive devices that were found at the Democratic National Committee headquarters and the Republican National Committee headquarters but said both incidents are being investigated.





Politics

Timeline: How One Of The Darkest Days In American History Unfolded

Also Thursday, U.S. Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy announced that a "7-foot non-scalable fence" is being erected around the entire U.S. Capitol. It is to remain in place for at least the next 30 days, he said.Additional National Guard units are also being deployed, he added.

Deaths, injuries and arrests

The death on Thursday of officer Sicknick comes after D.C. officials said four others had died in the storming of the Capitol, including a woman who was shot inside the building by a Capitol Police officer. Sicknick was one of dozens of police officers injured while trying to control the mob of pro-Trump extremists who temporarily shut down a vote to certify President-elect Joe Biden's win.

In addition to the woman who was shot, three people — two men in their 50s and one woman in her 30s — died after separate medical emergencies, said D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser and D.C. Metropolitan Police Chief Robert Contee during a news conference.

Contee said 56 officers were injured, describing "a lot of valiant fighting" to perform their duties despite facing tear gas and other hazards. One officer, he said, was "snatched into a crowd," where he was beaten and tazed repeatedly.

City police officers arrested 70 people on charges related to unrest from Wednesday through 7 a.m. Thursday, Washington's Metropolitan Police Department said. Most of those arrests were for violating curfew, with many also facing charges of unlawful entry.



The Picture Show

PHOTOS: Mayhem Erupts In D.C. As Pro-Trump Extremists Storm U.S. Capitol

Assigning responsibility

The scenes of chaos Wednesday afternoon, as a Trump rally devolved into unrest and insurrection, left the country shaken and the nation's capital on alert.

Bowser blamed the violence on Trump, calling him an "unhinged president" who has peddled baseless conspiracy theories.

Bowser and other Democrats called for the top security officials at the Capitol to resign. Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund handed in his resignation, effective next week. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said that he requested and received the immediate resignation of Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Michael Stenger.

When Bowser was asked about the breakdown of the Capitol Police's security effort, she didn't mince words.

"Obviously, it was a failure, or you would not have had police lines breached and people enter the Capitol building by breaking windows," she said, "and terrorizing the people, the members of Congress who were doing a very sacred constitutional requirement of their jobs. So clearly, there was failure there."

White House spokeswoman Kayleigh McEnany called the violence appalling and said a violent group had ruined the First Amendment rights of thousands.



Watch Video At: https://youtu.be/5_7zJ8yJfOg

NPR YouTube

Other parts of the investigation

The violence wasn't directed solely at the U.S. Capitol building. Police also responded to reports of suspicious packages discovered on Capitol grounds and in other areas of the city. Two pipe bombs left at the Republican National Committee headquarters and the Democratic National Committee headquarters were discovered by police and safely detonated, police said.

In a car on Capitol grounds, law enforcement found a cooler full of gasoline bombs and a long gun, Contee told reporters.

The FBI confirmed to NPR that the agency is involved in ongoing investigations and said, "Two suspected explosive devices were rendered safe by the FBI and our law enforcement partners."

Police and security response

The entire D.C. National Guard has been mobilized. By this weekend, McCarthy said, a total of 6,200 National Guard members will be in place to support police and security efforts.

On the morning after the insurrection, Contee said, police officers were "scouring" area hotels in hopes of identifying and arresting people seen in the plentiful videos that have emerged from the Capitol.

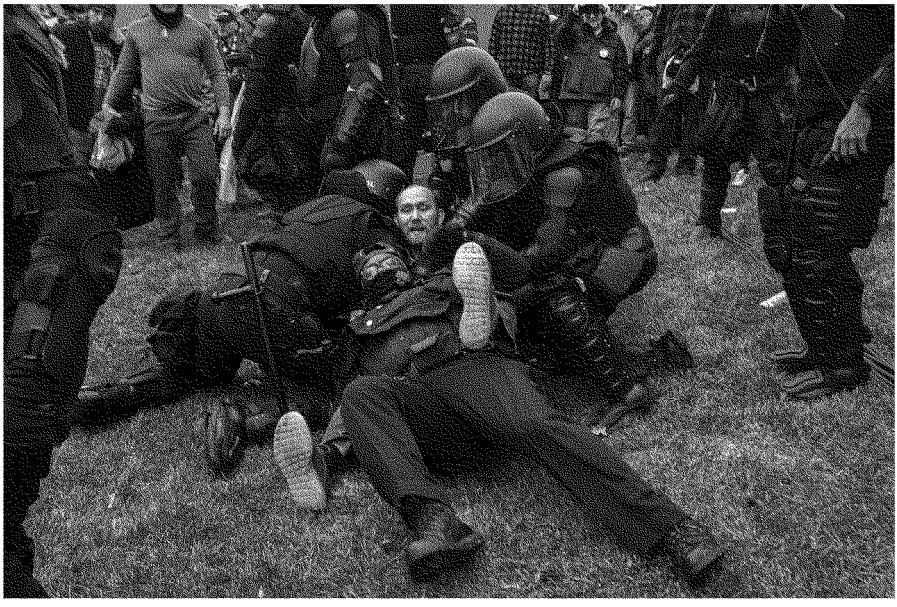


Enlarge this image

A pro-Trump protester resists arrest on Wednesday. There were few arrests in relation to the scope of the unrest as of Wednesday night. **Michael Nigro/Sipa USA via Reuters hide caption**

toggle caption

Michael Nigro/Sipa USA via Reuters



A pro-Trump protester resists arrest on Wednesday. There were few arrests in relation to the scope of the unrest as of Wednesday night.

Michael Nigro/Sipa USA via Reuters
At least four people were arrested for carrying a pistol without a license and having a large-capacity ammunition feeding device, including one instance of possessing a firearm on Capitol grounds. Those arrested are from across the U.S., including North Carolina, Michigan, Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Oregon.

Contee said not all people who gained entry into the Capitol building were taken into custody.

Videos taken of the chaos appeared to show, at best, an unprepared police force easily overrun by rioters or, at worst, one that appeared to acquiesce to the mob. Unverified videos shared on social media showed a police officer taking selfies with some rioters who entered the Capitol, and another video appeared to show officers moving barricades to allow a large crowd of people to approach the building.



Enlarge this image

Rioters damaged the U.S. Capitol after they breached security and entered the building during a session of Congress on Wednesday to tally the 2020 electoral votes. **Olivier Douliery/AFP via Getty Images hide caption**

toggle caption

Olivier Douliery/AFP via Getty Images



Rioters damaged the U.S. Capitol after they breached security and entered the building during a session of Congress on Wednesday to tally the 2020 electoral votes.

Olivier Douliery/AFP via Getty Images

Capitol Police officers, who usually number around 2,300, have jurisdiction over Congress and its grounds. According to D.C. law, D.C. Metropolitan police can make arrests on Capitol grounds only with the consent of or at the request of Capitol Police.

Lawmakers have promised a full investigation into the Capitol Police's actions.

California Democratic Rep. Zoe Lofgren, chairwoman of the House Administration Committee, said the breach "raises grave security concerns." She said her committee would work with bipartisan House and Senate leadership to address concerns and review the response in the coming days.

The FBI has set up a tip line webpage for information tied to the riots. The agency said it's seeking information to "assist in identifying individuals who are actively instigating violence in Washington, D.C."



Political repercussions

Hours after Trump's supporters laid siege to an entire branch of government with the apparent aim of keeping him in office in defiance of the results of the 2020 election, the president issued a statement early Thursday morning that conceded "there will be an orderly transition on January 20th."

> Statement by President Donald J. Trump on the Electoral Certification:
>
> "Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will be an orderly transition on January 20th. I have always said we would continue our...
>
> — Dan Scavino (@DanScavino) January 7, 2021

However, that promise came too late for several top advisers at the White House, who resigned, citing the president's response to the siege as the reason for their departure — with less than two weeks to go in their jobs.

Stephanie Grisham, the chief of staff for first lady Melania Trump, submitted her resignation effective immediately, as did White House social secretary Anna Cristina Niceta and White House press aide Sarah Matthews.

Deputy national security adviser Matt Pottinger reportedly also resigned Wednesday, according to Bloomberg News.

Some lawmakers, including Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., have called for Trump's impeachment for his "open sedition."

That effort is unlikely to gain enough support to be carried out before Biden's inauguration on Jan. 20.

> Today, Rep. Omar announced articles of impeachment against Donald Trump.
>
> Full statement below. pic.twitter.com/LbEPHBkv5O
>
> — Rep. Ilhan Omar (@Ilhan) January 7, 2021

Correction Jan. 8, 2021

A version of this story published at 8 p.m. ET prematurely reported that U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick had died, based on information from a source. Later, U.S. Capitol Police announced that Sicknick had died at 9:30 p.m.

- Capitol building attack
- trump



Insurrection At The Capitol: Live Updates

Shockwaves after pro-Trump rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol complex

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LAW

Portland Police Charge 8 After Demonstrators Vandalize Democratic Party Offices

January 21, 2021 · 4:57 AM ET

JACLYN DIAZ

More than 100 anti-fascist demonstrators in Portland attacked police and vandalized the city's Democratic Party of Oregon building Wednesday afternoon, breaking several windows in the process, according to police.

Police arrested eight people between the ages of 18 and 38, some of whom were armed with knives and long poles, the department said.

Before descending on the offices of the Democratic Party of Oregon, the crowd scuffled with police on bikes who were monitoring the area where the group had told supporters to meet.

Police say the demonstrators used similar language in flyers announcing the Jan. 20 event as other rallies held months prior that "were punctuated by violence and destruction." The flyers advertising a gathering at Revolution Hall discouraged livestreaming, according to the city's police bureau.

When the crowd gathered outside Revolution Hall, a music venue in the city, dozens of demonstrators started pushing against police and snatched one of the officers' bikes in the melee. When other officers came to assist their colleagues, the demonstrators began blocking police when they tried to leave, the department said.

Reuters reports that one of the banners held by the demonstrators said, "We don't want Biden. We want revenge for police murders, imperialist wars, and fascist

massacres." Some members of the group then moved dumpsters into the street and lit them on fire before the crowd started to disperse.

Article continues after sponsor message

State capitals across the country were already on high alert on Wednesday for President Biden's inauguration. Many state and law enforcement officials feared that similar riots to the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. would occur in their cities. For most of the nation, the day was quiet.

Portland has been a hotbed of anti-police and racial justice demonstrations. In summer, the city experienced more than 100 days of demonstrations and protests that turned violent.

oregon democratic party portland

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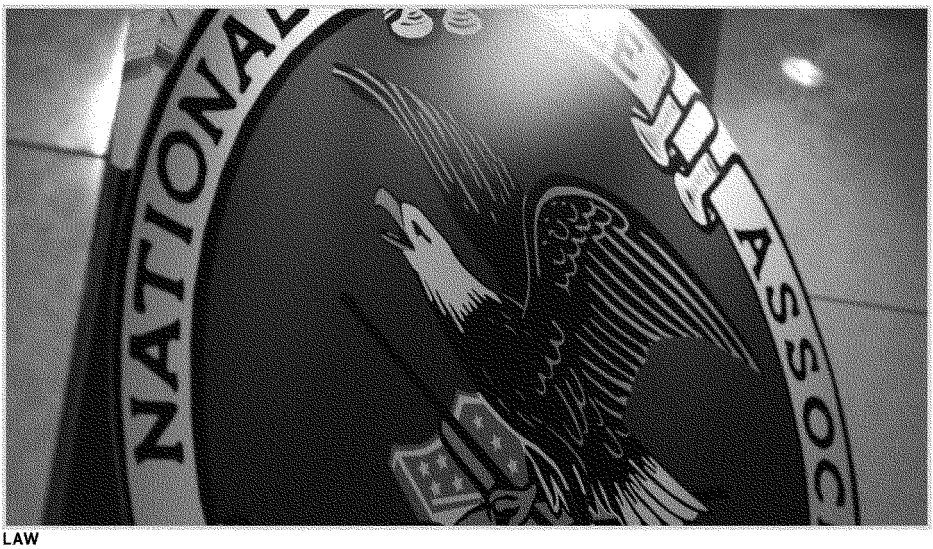


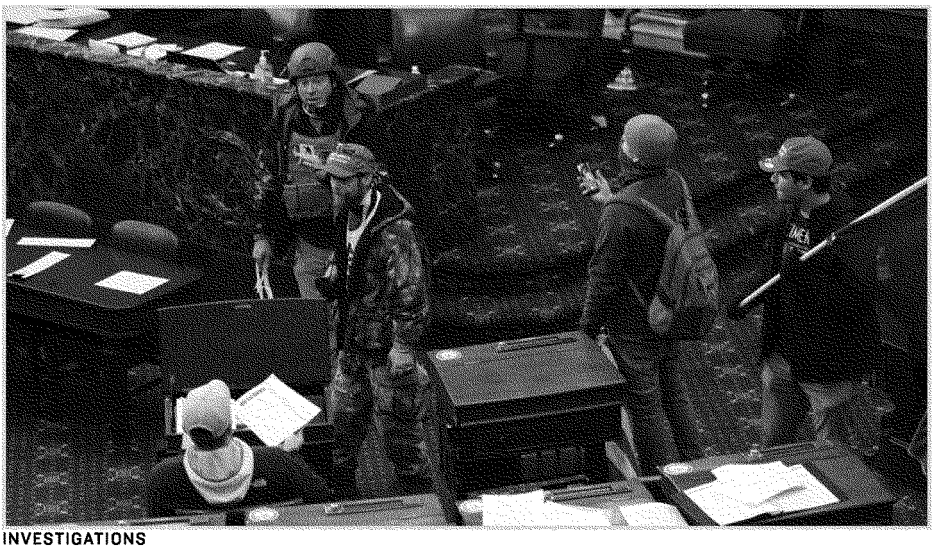
LAW

Judge Rejects NRA's Bid To Throw Out Or Transfer Lawsuit That Could Shut It Down





TECHNOLOGY
Judge Refuses To Reinstate Parler After Amazon Shut It Down



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NEWS

Colorado congressman says he was trapped in House chambers as rioters tried to break doors

Jacy Marmaduke Fort Collins Coloradoan

Published 2:58 p.m. MT Jan. 6, 2021 | **Updated 6:57 p.m. MT Jan. 6, 2021**

U.S. Rep. Jason Crow, D-Colo., said he was briefly trapped in the House of Representatives chambers as rioters tried to break through the doors amid unrest at the U.S Capitol on Wednesday.

Also trapped in the chambers with Crow were three other members of Colorado's Congressional delegation, the Colorado Sun reported: Rep. Joe Neguse of Colorado's 2nd District, Rep. Ken Buck of eastern Colorado's 4th District, and Rep. Lauren Boebert of western Colorado's 3rd District.

"I thought we'd have to fight our way out," Crow, an Army veteran, told the New York Times, adding that he helped fellow lawmakers put on gas masks as he moved them away from the barricaded door and instructed them to take off the lapel pins that identify House members.

He told the Times he had only a pen to defend himself with. The group was trapped inside the chambers for about 15 minutes until Capitol Police cleared a path for them to exit the room., according to the Times.

Police led the lawmakers out with their guns drawn, Crow told the Times. Some officers barricaded the doors and others "pinned protesters to the ground," according to the Times, as the lawmakers moved to a secure area.

On Twitter, Crow called the situation a "coup attempt" and vowed to return to the House chambers to finish the job they'd started before a mob of rioters breached the Capitol building Wednesday afternoon.

Crow, who said he's now being protected in a secure location, was one of several members of Colorado's congressional delegation who shared updates on their safety and spoke out about

the unfolding situation in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday afternoon. The pro-Trump mob tore past law enforcement, halting Congressional proceedings to certify the presidential election results.

Buck, a Republican who recently spoke out against President Donald Trump's efforts to contest the election results, called the events at the Capitol "anarchy." He told Savannah Guthrie on NBC that he was safe and hunkered down with some staff members in an office.

“We’re anxious and happy to see the TV so we can see what’s going on at the Capitol," he said.

He was on the House floor getting ready to speak when a plain clothes officer from Capitol Police came in and escorted House Speaker Nancy Pelosi from her chair.

“I hope the rioters understand there will be consequences for what they’ve done," Buck said.

When asked if he was angry, he said, “I’m absolutely angry. This isn’t the way this country operates. It’s a disgrace and for anyone to tolerate anybody to come in and try to shut down our government is absolutely disgraceful."

In a joint statement with Buck, Colorado Gov. Jared Polis said "an assault on our democratic republic is an assault on all of us who believe in our constitution and what makes our country extraordinary."

"The alarming scenes that are unfolding in Washington are something you might expect to see in countries far from our shores, not in our nation’s capitol, and certainly not in the hallowed halls or on the floor of Congress," the statement continued. "We are relieved that Colorado’s federal delegation is safe. We all must step up to protect the institutions of our republic, free and fair elections, and the rule of law.”

Live coverage: Pro-Trump rioters breach Capitol, forcing lockdown

Sen. Michael Bennet also posted on Twitter that he and his staff were safe in a secure location. He wrote "today's attack on the Capitol and our democracy is dangerous and unacceptable."

"We need to finish the job of certification as soon as possible to show the world that our democracy is up to this test," he added in a follow-up tweet. "Our democracy is up to this test."

U.S. Rep. Joe Neguse, a Democrat who represents Fort Collins in the 2nd Congressional District, tweeted that he and his staff were evacuated from the House floor and in a safe location.

"Thank you to all of our brave law enforcement officials for working so hard to protect the Capitol Complex," Neguse wrote. "Keep the faith."

Sen. John Hickenlooper is also safe. He said on Twitter that this is "a sad day for our country, but our democracy is stronger than the dangerous attack on the Capitol today."

U.S. Reps. Doug Lamborn and Lauren Boebert were the two members of Colorado's congressional delegation who said they planned to object to House certification of the election results. Boebert spoke against accepting Arizona's election results on the House floor before rioters made their way into the building.

"I strongly condemn those individuals that have chosen to incite violence and have put our law enforcement in harm's way," Lamborn wrote on Twitter. "Today is supposed to be a day of constitutional debate, not violence. This is not who we are as Americans."

Boebert tweeted later Wednesday afternoon that she and her staff were safe.

"I support peaceful protests and the rule of law, and denounce all acts of violence," she wrote. "I am grateful to the Capitol Police for their service. Thank you for keeping us safe."

Colorado Rep. Diana DeGette shared a photo of herself walking through the Capitol building carrying a gas mask. In a since deleted tweet, she called for President Donald Trump's impeachment.

"This isn't a protest. This is an attempted coup. I never thought we'd see such anarchy spurred by our own president," DeGette posted on Twitter.

She said lawmakers would return to the floor "as soon as possible to finish certifying the results of the electoral college and declaring Joe Biden and Kamala Harris the next president and vice president of the United States."

Colorado Democratic Party Chair Morgan Carroll released a statement condemning "the attempted coup and lawless behavior displayed at the U.S. Capitol, carried out by domestic terrorists in the name of Donald Trump."

"This is the consequence of elected officials and political candidates entertaining harmful disinformation and unfounded conspiracy theories and spreading them to their followers,"

Carroll continued.

Reporter Pat Ferrier contributed to this story.

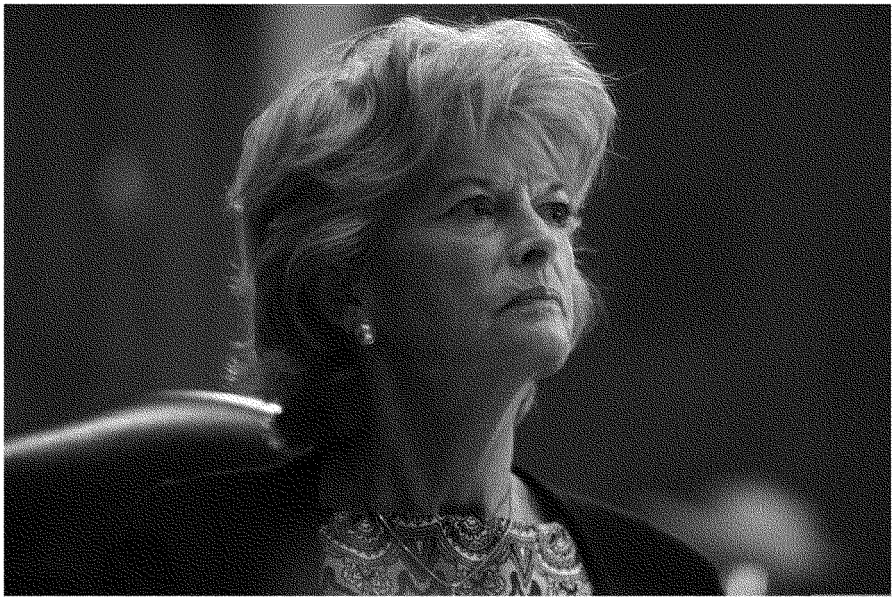
Jacy Marmaduke covers government accountability for the Coloradoan. Follow her on Twitter @jacymarmaduke. Support her work and that of other Coloradoan journalists by purchasing a digital subscription today.

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

Politics

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski calls on President Trump to resign, questions her future as a Republican

Author: **James Brooks** Updated: January 9 Published January 8



FILE - In this June 23, 2020, file photo Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, listens during a Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee hearing to examine COVID-19 on Capitol Hill in Washington. (Michael Reynolds/Pool via AP, File)

U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski said Friday that Donald Trump should resign the presidency immediately and that if the Republican Party cannot separate itself from Trump, she isn't certain she has a future with the party.

"I want him to resign. I want him out. He has caused enough damage," Murkowski, R-Alaska, said during an interview from her small Capitol office, steps away from the Senate chambers that were invaded by pro-Trump rioters on Wednesday.

Murkowski is the first Senate Republican to call for Trump's resignation, according to CNN and national congressional reporters.

"I think he should leave. He said he's not going to show up. He's not going to appear at the inauguration. He hasn't been focused on what is going on with COVID. He's either been golfing or he's been inside the Oval Office fuming and throwing every single person who has been loyal and faithful to him under the bus, starting with the vice president. He doesn't want to stay there. He only wants to stay there for the title. He only wants to stay there for his ego. He needs to get out. He needs to do the good thing, but I don't think he's capable of doing a good thing," she said.

Trump to blame for riot, Murkowski says

Murkowski said that while "there may have been many, many, many, many good Americans who came to Washington, D.C., because they felt strongly in support of this president," Trump incited them to storm the Capitol after a speech near the Washington Monument.

[Q&A with Alaska U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan on the Capitol riot and what happens next]

Even before Election Day, the president refused to say whether he would accept the election results, Murkowski said, and then tried to overturn the results.

"I will attribute it to the president, who said, even after his vice president told him that morning, 'I do not have the constitutional authority to do what you have asked me to do. I cannot do it. I have to protect and uphold the Constitution.' Even after the vice president told President Trump that, he still told his supporters to fight. How are they supposed to take that? It's an order from the president. And so that's what they did. They came up and they fought and people were harmed, and injured and died," Murkowski said.

Could Murkowski become an independent?

Asked whether she intends to remain a Republican, Murkowski said that depends on the party itself.

"Well, you know, there's a lot of people who actually thought that I did that in 2010, think that I became an independent. I didn't have any reason to leave my party in 2010. I was a Republican who ran a write-in campaign and I was successful. But I will tell you, if the Republican Party has become nothing more than the party of Trump, I sincerely question whether this is the party for me," she said.

[Watch - Murkowski: Capitol riot was 'incited from the highest level']

Views on the new-look U.S. Senate

The U.S. Senate is now split 50-50 between Republicans and Democratic-aligned senators, and the tiebreaking vote will be held by Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

Murkowski said she is disappointed that Republicans lost the Senate majority by losing two Georgia runoff elections that wrapped up Tuesday.

"I think that that was another area where I think you can look directly to President Trump. ... That was very, very, very unfortunate," she said.

Murkowski said she is speaking frequently with U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin, D-West Virginia, who is the most conservative Democrat in the Senate and will be a key vote on many Senate actions.

"We've talked a lot. In fact, my 3 o'clock call is with Joe and with a bipartisan group of colleagues that are really concerned about where we are, and how we move forward," she said.

"I think I am including myself as part of a group of members that wants to work to try to bring things together in the Senate and wants to try to get some business done. And this is going to be a (Biden) administration where I'm going to be disagreeing with where they're taking us on a lot of issues and policy, but I would like to think that we're never going to question their fidelity to the oath of office," Murkowski said.

Murkowski will not join Democratic majority

Later Friday, Murkowski told Alaska Public Media that she will not join the Senate's new Democratic majority but is talking to moderates in both parties, in the House as well as the Senate.

She said Republicans who did not repudiate Trump earlier — including herself — bear some responsibility for the state of Congress and the nation.

"I allowed myself to refrain from speaking my truth," Murkowski told Alaska Public Media. "And I can't just be quiet right now."

About this Author

James Brooks

Juneau-based James Brooks covers state government, the Alaska Legislature and general assignments for the Daily News. He previously reported and edited for the Juneau Empire, Kodiak Daily Mirror and Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

'I am not a terrorist': Retired Navy SEAL speaks after Capitol siege

The Navy veteran said he wanted lawmakers to be left "shaking in their shoes."

By **James Gordon Meek** and **Catherine Sanz**
January 12, 2021, 10:24 PM • 10 min read



Retired Navy SEAL boasts of 'breaching the Capitol'

*A video posted to Facebook by Adam Newbold following the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol sho.*Read More

A retired U.S. Navy SEAL is facing questions from the FBI after boasting in a Facebook video about "breaching the Capitol" last Wednesday after traveling to Washington to join a rally for President Donald Trump, an assault he said in the video that he hoped would ignite a "positive revolution."

The video shows Adam Newbold, 45, from Lisbon, Ohio, who the Navy confirmed is a retired reserve SEAL special warfare operator, in a car on his return home from Washington, telling his Facebook followers that he was "proud" of the assault on the U.S. Capitol building earlier that day.

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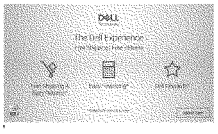

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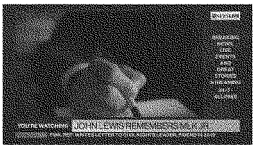

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Newbold, in the video, seeks to defend the actions of those who broke into the Capitol by falsely insisting that the only destruction occurred as the rioters tried to enter the building, and also incorrectly says that nothing was vandalized.

"There was destruction, breaching the Capitol, our building, our house. And, um, to get in you had to destroy doors and windows to get in," Newbold says in the video. The video has been deleted from Facebook, but a copy of it was obtained by ABC News.

+ MORE: Military investigating whether service members participated in US Capitol assault

Clad in the attire of his Ohio-based firearms training business, ATG Worldwide, also known as Advanced Training Group Worldwide, the former elite U.S. Navy frogman recounts the damage rioters inflicted, implying that he both witnessed the events and participated in them himself.

"There are stories to tell from generations upon generations, um, that hopefully, uh ... that hopefully it pans out to be a positive revolution," he boasts. "HOOYAH!"



Obtained by ABC News

*A screengrab from a video posted to Facebook by Adam Newbold following the Jan. 6 attack on t*Read More

Newbold, who served 24 years in the U.S. Navy and has said online that he trains civilians and police in tactical shooting, said he wanted to make lawmakers "think twice about what they're doing" and to be left "shaking in their shoes."

When reached by ABC News on Tuesday, Newbold confirmed that he had recorded his thoughts in the front seat of a vehicle on the night of the riot. He said that the FBI has interviewed him about his activities in the nation's capital, and that the bureau has asked for a second interview.

"I am cooperating with the FBI," Newbold told ABC News in a 45-minute interview in which he expressed remorse for his actions and said of the attack on the Capitol that "it was all taken too far."

Speaking in an anguished tone far different from his post-riot video, Newbold professed that he "felt rage" that day, but that he accepts that Joe Biden will be the next commander-in-chief.

+ MORE: Many Capitol rioters implicated by their own social media posts

"I would like to express to you just a cry for clemency, as you understand that my life now has been absolutely turned upside-down," Newbold told ABC News. "I am not a terrorist. I am not a traitor."

Newbold denied that he ever assaulted police officers guarding the Capitol or penetrated the building himself, but said he was caught up in the moment with the crowd of Trump supporters trying to stop the certification of the 2020 presidential election. However after posting his own chest-thumping video on Facebook, he said the reality kicked in when he got word of the shooting death of one of the rioters, and later the death of a U.S. Capitol Police officer.

"It accomplished nothing. What the hell was it all for?" Newbold told ABC News.



Jim Urquhart/Reuters

*Supporters of President Donald Trump climb on walls at the U.S. Capitol during a protest against.*Read More

The involvement of active or retired military in the Jan. 6 insurrection has drawn special attention from lawmakers and law enforcement because of the oath that members of American armed forces take to follow the Constitution. At least three of the rioters arrested to date are believed to have served in the U.S. military, as have some of those taking the lead in spreading conspiracy theories around the 2020 election.

Capt. Ryan Perry, a spokesperson for Naval Special Warfare Command, said, "It would be inappropriate to discuss the actions of an individual, whose reserve service ended almost four years ago, that are subject to an ongoing federal investigation. However, Rear Adm. Howard made it clear earlier this week in his message to the current Naval Special Warfare Force that the attack on Capitol Hill serves as 'an imperative for each of us to reflect on, and reaffirm, our oath to support and defend the Constitution. We serve this great nation and our fellow Americans -- all of them -- equally, and without political bias.'"

+ MORE: Twitter blocks 70,000 QAnon accounts after US Capitol riot

Retired Marine Mick Mulroy and retired Navy SEAL Eric Oehlerich, both ABC News contributors, said in a joint statement that "as members of the military, we fought to defend our constitutionally guaranteed right to free speech. But the attack against the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 was not about free speech; it was an insurrection. Any military member who participated violated their oath to defend the United States' Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic."

For his part, Newbold told ABC News that he will never take up arms against the government he has served in "many deployments" with the military and an intelligence agency.

While a number of those participating in the uprising wore military apparel, Newbold appears to be the first veteran from the U.S. special operations community to be identified as having participated in the events, which turned violent.

John Minchillo/AP

Trump supporters at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., Jan. 6, 2021.

One video remaining on Newbold's event page for the D.C. rally for Trump advised his friends and followers to consider bringing walking sticks and mounted American flags to use as weapons to potentially fend off what he claimed could be violence by left-wing antifa protesters, as well as pepper spray and collapsible batons to defend themselves if necessary. Law enforcement officials have said there is no evidence that anybody from the antifa movement participated in the violence on Capitol Hill last week.

Some Trump supporters used the poles from their Stars and Stripes flags, as well as batons and pepper spray, to brutally assault U.S. Capitol Police and D.C. Metropolitan Police Department responding officers, as seen in violent videos from last Wednesday.

Some have compared the videos of crowds cheering each swing of a makeshift club at a police officer to Romans cheering gladiators in the Coliseum.

"Now I regret being in the crowd," Newbold told ABC News. "When you are in the arena, you don't see the big picture."

+ MORE: Armed protests being planned at all 50 state capitols, FBI bulletin says

In a photo taken during the riot, Newbold is seen straddling an abandoned and ransacked U.S. Capitol Police motorcycle. Before going to Washington, he spoke of trying to turn police officers to his point of view, but now he says that once there, he tried to de-escalate the violence and even stopped others from attacking officers, and that he thanked the police for their service on the Capitol steps.

But he also admits that in the video made after the incursion, he presented a much different tone than the one he has since adopted.

"I will tell you that some of your friends, your brothers, your members here, and patriots, were on the very, very front lines of that," Newbold says in his Jan. 6 video. "No matter how the media spins it, guys, it was a necessary thing."

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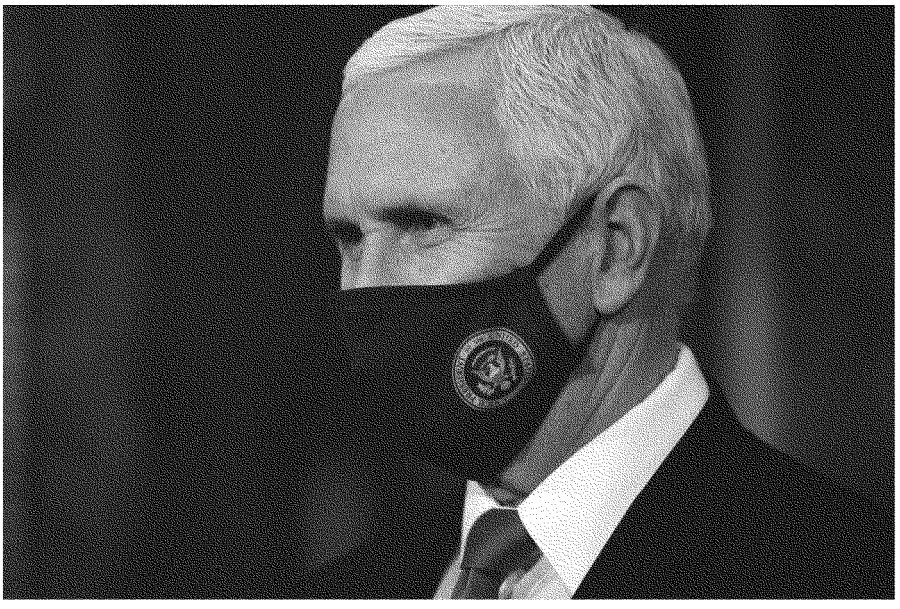
Read Pence's full letter saying he can't claim 'unilateral authority' to reject electoral votes

pbs.org/newshour/politics/read-pences-full-letter-saying-he-cant-claim-unilateral-authority-to-reject-electoral-votes

Associated Press January 6, 2021



WASHINGTON (AP) — Defying President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence said Wednesday that he does not have the power to discard electoral votes that will make Democrat Joe Biden the next president on Jan. 20.

Pence said in a statement issued minutes before he was to begin presiding over a joint session of Congress to count those votes that it was "my considered judgement that my oath to support and defend the Constitution constrains me from claiming unilateral authority to determine which electoral votes should be counted and which should not."

In the days before the joint session, Trump has pressured his vice president to toss electors from battleground states that voted for Biden to overturn the will of voters in a desperate and futile bid to undo President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the November election.

"If Mike Pence does the right thing we win the election," Trump told thousands of supporters who rallied Wednesday on the Ellipse, just south of the White House, an hour before the count in Congress was to begin.

"All Vice President Pence has to do is send it back to the states to recertify and we become president and you are the happiest people," Trump said, repeating a falsehood he has been promoting leading up to the congressional session.

Trump repeatedly pressured Pence to act during his more than 75-minute speech to supporters. "Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us," Trump said, "and if he doesn't, it's a sad day for our country."

Shortly before the 1 p.m. start of the joint session and even as Trump continued his verbal haranguing, Pence made clear in a three-page letter that he would follow the Constitution, not the commander in chief. While Trump was speaking, Pence's motorcade carried him through a heavily-secured Washington toward the Capitol, where thousands of Trump supporters were marching.

Pence has no unilateral power under the Constitution and congressional rules that govern the count. It is up to the House and Senate to voice objections, and states' electors were chosen in accordance with state law, not fraudulently.

Beginning at 1 p.m., Pence began to open the certificates of the electoral votes from each state and present them to the appointed "tellers" from the House and Senate in alphabetical order. At the end of the count, Pence, seated on the House of Representatives' rostrum, has the task of announcing who has won the majority of votes for both president and vice president.

Despite his largely ceremonial assignment, Pence has faced intense pressure from the president and legions of supporters who want the vice president to use the moment to overturn the will of the voters in a handful of battleground states.

Read Vice President Mike Pence's full statement on the electoral count.

THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

January 6, 2021

Dear Colleague:

Today, for the 59th time in our Nation's history, Congress will convene in Joint Session to count the electoral votes for President of the United States. Under our Constitution, it will be my duty as Vice President and as President of the Senate to serve as the presiding officer.

After an election with significant allegations of voting irregularities and numerous instances of officials setting aside state election law, I share the concerns of millions of Americans about the integrity of this election. The American people choose the American President, and have every right under the law to demand free and fair elections and a full investigation of electoral misconduct. As presiding officer, I will do my duty to ensure that these concerns receive a fair and open hearing in the Congress of the United States. Objections will be heard, evidence will be presented, and the elected representatives of the American people will make their decision.

Our Founders created the Electoral College in 1787, and it first convened in 1789. With the advent of political parties, the Electoral College was amended in 1804 to provide that Electors vote separately for President and Vice President. Following a contentious election in 1876, with widespread allegations of fraud and malfeasance, Congress spent a decade establishing rules and procedures to govern the counting of electoral votes and the resolution of any objections.

During the 130 years since the Electoral Count Act was passed, Congress has, without exception, used these formal procedures to count the electoral votes every four years.

Given the controversy surrounding this year's election, some approach this year's quadrennial tradition with great expectation, and others with dismissive disdain. Some believe that as Vice President, I should be able to accept or reject electoral votes unilaterally. Others believe that electoral votes should never be challenged in a Joint Session of Congress.

After a careful study of our Constitution, our laws, and our history, I believe neither view is correct.

The President is the chief executive officer of the Federal Government under our Constitution, possessing immense power to impact the lives of the American people. The Presidency belongs to the American people, and to them alone. When disputes concerning a presidential election arise, under Federal law, it is the people's representatives who review the evidence and resolve disputes through a democratic process.

Our Founders were deeply skeptical of concentrations of power and created a Republic based on separation of powers and checks and balances under the Constitution of the United States.

Vesting the Vice President with unilateral authority to decide presidential contests would be entirely antithetical to that design. As a student of history who loves the Constitution and reveres its Framers, I do not believe that the Founders of our country intended to invest the Vice President with unilateral authority to decide which electoral votes should be counted during the Joint Session of Congress, and no Vice President in American history has ever asserted such authority. Instead, Vice Presidents presiding over Joint Sessions have uniformly followed the Electoral Count Act, conducting the proceedings in an orderly manner even where the count resulted in the defeat of their party or their own candidacy.

As Supreme Court Justice Joseph Bradley wrote following the contentious election of 1876, "the powers of the President of the Senate are merely ministerial… He is not invested with any authority for making any investigation outside of the Joint Meeting of the two Houses… [I]f any examination at all is to be gone into, or any judgment exercised in relation to the votes received, it must be performed and exercised by the two Houses." More recently, as the former U.S. Court of Appeals Judge J. Michael Luttig observed, "[t]he only responsibility and power of the Vice President under the Constitution is to faithfully count the Electoral College votes as they have been cast," adding "[t]he Constitution does not empower the Vice President to alter in any way the votes that have been cast, either by rejecting certain votes or otherwise."

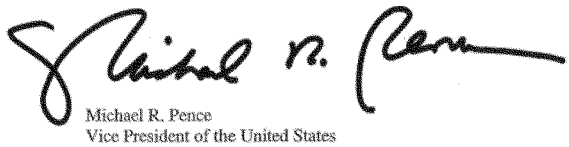
It is my considered judgment that my oath to support and defend the Constitution constrains me from claiming unilateral authority to determine which electoral votes should be counted and which should not.

While my role as presiding officer is largely ceremonial, the role of the Congress is much different, and the Electoral Count Act of 1887 establishes a clear procedure to address election controversies when they arise during the count of the vote of the Electoral College. Given the voting irregularities that took place in our November elections and the disregard of state election statutes by some officials, I welcome the efforts of Senate and House members who have stepped forward to use their authority under the law to raise objections and present evidence.

As presiding officer, I will ensure that any objections that are sponsored by both a Representative and a Senator are given proper consideration, and that all facts supporting those objections are brought before the Congress and the American people. Those who suggest that raising objections under the Electoral Count Act is improper or undemocratic ignore more than 130 years of history, and fail to acknowledge that Democrats raised objections in Congress each of the last three times that a Republican candidate for President prevailed.

Today it will be my duty to preside when the Congress convenes in Joint Session to count the votes of the Electoral College, and I will do so to the best of my ability. I ask only that Representatives and Senators who will assemble before me approach this moment with the same sense of duty and an open mind, setting politics and personal interests aside, and do our part to faithfully discharge our duties under the Constitution. I also pray that we will do so with humility and faith, remembering the words of John Quincy Adams, who said, "Duty is ours; results are God's."

Four years ago, surrounded by my family, I took an oath to support and defend the Constitution, which ended with the words, "So help me God." Today I want to assure the American people that I will keep the oath I made to them and I will keep the oath I made to Almighty God. When the Joint Session of Congress convenes today, I will do my duty to see to it that we open the certificates of the Electors of the several states, we hear objections raised by Senators and Representatives, and we count the votes of the Electoral College for President and Vice President in a manner consistent with our Constitution, laws, and history. So Help Me God.

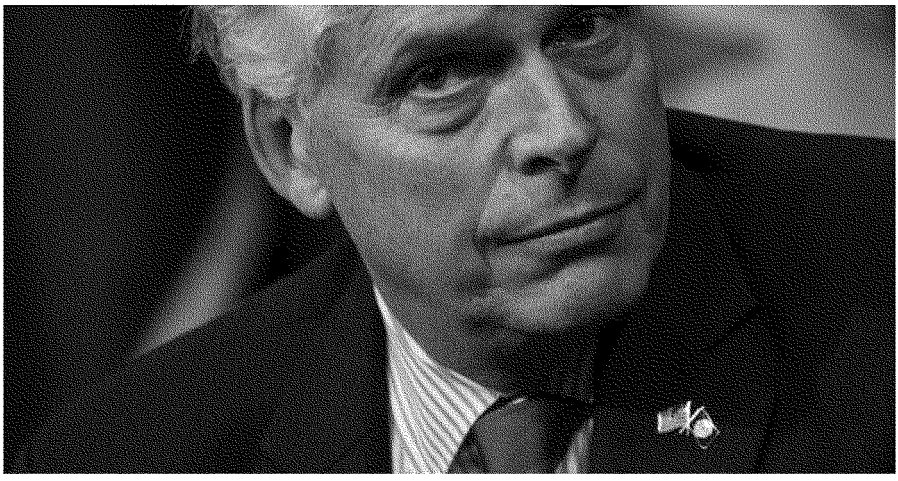


Michael R. Pence
Vice President of the United States

Virginia governor to white nationalists: 'Go home ... Shame on you'

wcpo.com/news/national/virginia-governor-to-white-nationalists-go-home-shame-on-you

By: CNN August 12, 2017



Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe had a strong message for white supremacists and neo-Nazis who came to Charlottesville for planned rally on Saturday.

"Our message is plain and simple. Go home ... You are not wanted in this great commonwealth. Shame on you," McAuliffe said in a press conference at about 6:30 p.m. local time.

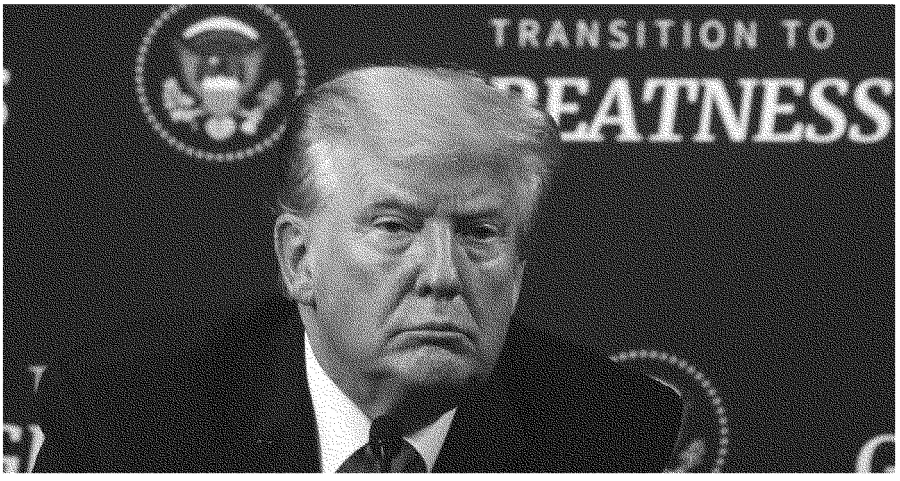
PHOTOS: Chaos in Charlottesville

Earlier, during the news conference, McAuliffe said three people died Saturday in Charlottesville as a result of the unrest that stemmed from that rally.

McAuliffe's pointed reaction was contrasted with President Trump's blame of "many sides" for the violence in Charlottesville.

Trump shares video of supporter saying "the only good Democrat is a dead Democrat"

cbsnews.com/news/president-trump-shares-video-of-supporter-saying-the-only-good-democrat-is-a-dead-democrat/



President Trump on Thursday retweeted a video of a supporter saying that the "only good Democrat is a dead Democrat." The man in the video is a New Mexico politician who faced calls to resign after making the remark earlier this month.

Mr. Trump at midnight retweeted a video from Cowboys For Trump featuring the group's founder, Couy Griffin, who is also the Otero County commissioner. The clip shows Griffin speaking to a crowd of supporters.

"I've come to a place where I've come to the conclusion that the only good Democrat is a dead Democrat," Griffin says in the first seconds of the clip, drawing cheers and applause.

"I don't say that in the physical sense, and I can already see where the videos getting edited where it says I want to go murder Democrats," Griffin continues. "No. I say that in the political sense because the Democrat agenda and policy is anti-American right now."

Moments later, Griffin again says that "the only good Democrat is a dead Democrat," but adds that he's "saying it politically-speaking" and that he's calling for conservative candidates to take the majorities in New Mexico's government.

Mr. Trump did not comment directly on what Griffin says in the video, writing only, "Thank you Cowboys. See you in New Mexico!"

CBS News asked Griffin Thursday if he stood by his statement in the video and he replied, "Well, no." He said did not wish "physical harm on any individual person." He also said he'd been receiving death threats in response to the video.

"I've got a lot of friends who are Democrats, and I don't wish ill on them," he said. Later he added, "I don't wish them ill, I don't wish death upon on them, but I sure don't think they do our country any justice."

But Griffin also said there were some Democrats in Washington and in statehouses who may have committed "treason," and people guilty of treason face "a firing squad" or "the end of the rope." Griffin has a history of comments saying Democratic lawmakers should be hanged or executed.

The video shows Griffin speaking at a rally in a church in May 17, where he defied a public safety order for the coronavirus pandemic. Politicians in New Mexico had already called for Griffin to step down when the video first circulated.

"The County Commissioner's comment is despicable, indefensible, and un-American," New Mexico's House Speaker Brian Egolf, a Democrat, said on Twitter. "He represents Rs, Ds, and Independents. He should immediately apologize and resign."

The New Mexico GOP indirectly commented on Griffin's video, issuing a statement saying, "The Republican Party of New Mexico wants to state for the record that any statements, whether in jest or serious about harming another individual are just plain wrong."

Griffin told CBS News he would not resign.

Speaking about President Trump tweeting his video, Griffin said, "It really means a lot to me, because I know that the president of the United States has my back."

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npr.org/2020/12/12/945825924/trump-supporters-arrive-in-washington-once-again-for-a-million-maga-march



NPR

-

Politics

December 12, 202012:44 PM ET

Jason Slotkin

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Twitter



Enlarge this image

Tyrone Turner



Tyrone Turner

Updated at 2:23 p.m. ET Sunday

Thousands of President Trump's supporters — four weeks after a similar protest — flocked to the nation's capital for a protest in support of the president and his false claims of a stolen election.

By Saturday night, clashes between rallygoers and counterprotesters escalated into violence, with four people stabbed and 33 people arrested into Sunday morning. Nine people were transported to hospitals, according to Washington, D.C.'s Fire and EMS Department. Two of the nine were police officers with injuries that were not life-threatening.

Several groups that attended last month's protest marched again on Saturday. Those included the Proud Boys, a self-proclaimed "Western-chauvinist" organization known for violent confrontations with left-wing protesters. It's considered a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.



Enlarge this image

Supporters of President Trump participate in the Million MAGA March to protest the outcome of the 2020 presidential election, in front of the U.S. Supreme Court on Dec. 12 in Washington, D.C. **Tyrone Turner/WAMU hide caption**

toggle caption

Tyrone Turner/WAMU



Supporters of President Trump participate in the Million MAGA March to protest the outcome of the 2020 presidential election, in front of the U.S. Supreme Court on Dec. 12 in Washington, D.C.

Tyrone Turner/WAMU



Enlarge this image
President Trump broadcast his approval of Saturday's demonstration, tweeting, "Wow! Thousands of people forming in Washington (D.C.) for Stop the Steal. Didn't know about this, but I'll be seeing them! #MAGA." **Tyrone Turner/WAMU hide caption**

toggle caption
Tyrone Turner/WAMU



President Trump broadcast his approval of Saturday's demonstration, tweeting, "Wow! Thousands of people forming in Washington (D.C.) for Stop the Steal. Didn't know about this, but I'll be seeing them! #MAGA."

Tyrone Turner/WAMU
On Saturday evening, Proud Boys and counterprotesters were facing off in scattered skirmishes downtown. Police tried to separate the two sides. Counterprotesters also clashed with police at times, DCist reported.

> About 30 mins ago, an intense skirmish happened when about 30 to 40 Proud Boys emerged from the alley and approached counter protestors from behind. pic.twitter.com/ueD4tfD5lr
>
> — Matt Blitz (@WhyBlitz) December 13, 2020

A total of nine injured people were transported from D.C.'s downtown to hospitals after 7 p.m., the fire department said. Police said Sunday that 33 people were arrested between Saturday into Sunday morning, on charges including simple assault, possession of a prohibited weapon, assault on a police officer, crossing a police line, assault with a dangerous weapon and other charges.

Reporter Jenny Gathright of NPR member station WAMU observed members of the Proud Boys marching through Freedom Plaza earlier Saturday. Some of them were holding up white power symbols.

On Saturday morning, a White House spokesman confirmed that as the group gathered in D.C., one of its leaders, Enrique Tarrio, took a public tour of the White House. Tarrio posted about his visit to the right-wing social media app Parler. The White House says that Tarrio did not meet with the president, nor was he specifically invited. Tarrio said the visit "shows we've come a long way."



Enlarge this image
People march in support of Trump and in protest of the outcome of the 2020 presidential election, in Washington, D.C. **Tyrone Turner/WAMU hide caption**

toggle caption
Tyrone Turner/WAMU



People march in support of Trump and in protest of the outcome of the 2020 presidential election, in Washington, D.C.

Tyrone Turner/WAMU



Enlarge this image

A Proud Boy member gestures as he marches in support of Trump. Thousands of protesters who don't accept that President-elect Joe Biden won the election were rallying. **Tyrone Turner/WAMU hide caption**

toggle caption

Tyrone Turner/WAMU



A Proud Boy member gestures as he marches in support of Trump. Thousands of protesters who don't accept that President-elect Joe Biden won the election were rallying.

Tyrone Turner/WAMU



Enlarge this image

A member of the Proud Boys makes a white power hand gesture. **Dee Dwyer for NPR hide caption**

toggle caption

Dee Dwyer for NPR



A member of the Proud Boys makes a white power hand gesture.

Dee Dwyer for NPR

> Proud Boys in kilts. Dozens of them gathering downtown now for today's March for Trump. pic.twitter.com/BTJWmGC6Yp
>
> — Hannah Allam (@HannahAllam) December 12, 2020



Tyrone Turner/WAMU



Enlarge this image

Police create a line separating counterprotesters from Proud Boys. **Dee Dwyer for NPR**
hide caption

toggle caption
Dee Dwyer for NPR



Police create a line separating counterprotesters from Proud Boys.

Dee Dwyer for NPR



Enlarge this image
A counterprotester talks with a police officer, saying police are protecting Trump supporters and not counterprotesters. **Dee Dwyer for NPR hide caption**

toggle caption
Dee Dwyer for NPR



A counterprotester talks with a police officer, saying police are protecting Trump supporters and not counterprotesters.

Dee Dwyer for NPR
Among the speakers at the pro-Trump rally during the day was former national security adviser Michael Flynn, who in his first public remarks since he was pardoned by Trump sought to deny President-elect Joe Biden's victory.

"People ask me this all the time now, in the last couple of days certainly: On a scale of 1 to 10, who's going to be the next president of the United States? And I say 10, Donald J. Trump! 10!" Flynn told the crowd.

Flynn was pardoned by Trump late last month. He had pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI during the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Other speakers at the rally included My Pillow CEO Mike Lindell and right-wing activist Jack Posobiec.



Enlarge this image

Counterprotesters form a line behind a police line while chanting, "Whose streets? Our streets," to the Proud Boys, who are on the opposite side chanting, "F*** antifa." **Dee Dwyer for NPR hide caption**

toggle caption

Dee Dwyer for NPR



Counterprotesters form a line behind a police line while chanting, "Whose streets? Our streets," to the Proud Boys, who are on the opposite side chanting, "F*** antifa."

Dee Dwyer for NPR



Kenny Lheureux of Gloucester, Va., wears his Super Trump outfit. **Tyrone Turner/WAMU**
hide caption

toggle caption
Tyrone Turner/WAMU



Enlarge this image

Police officers create a line between Trump supporters and counterprotesters. **Dee Dwyer for NPR hide caption**

toggle caption

Dee Dwyer for NPR



Police officers create a line between Trump supporters and counterprotesters.

Dee Dwyer for NPR



Tyrone Turner/WAMU
Elsewhere, right-wing conspiracy theorist Alex Jones was spotted on the National Mall. Jones also attended last month's march.

Similar to last's month larger rally, Saturday's demonstration brought participants into D.C. from far and wide. Louis Murray, who came from Boston, told WAMU that even if Trump's legal efforts to overturn the election fail, "we can still celebrate Trumpism" and "get ready for 2024."

"This is a very hopeful day for conservatives in America," Murray told WAMU.

Trump broadcast his approval of Saturday's demonstration, tweeting, "Wow! Thousands of people forming in Washington (D.C.) for Stop the Steal. Didn't know about this, but I'll be seeing them! #MAGA."

On Saturday, crowds cheered as Marine One flew overhead with the president on board en route to another event. During last month's protest, Trump made an impromptu visit, riding by the rally in his presidential motorcade.



Enlarge this image

Members of Black Lives Matter, Anthony Lorenzo Green (from left), Nee Nee and Qiana Johnson, stand at Black Lives Matter Plaza. **Dee Dwyer for NPR hide caption**

toggle caption

Dee Dwyer for NPR



Members of Black Lives Matter, Anthony Lorenzo Green (from left), Nee Nee and Qiana Johnson, stand at Black Lives Matter Plaza.

Dee Dwyer for NPR



Enlarge this image

Tyrone Turner/WAMU



Tyrone Turner/WAMU



Enlarge this image
Proud Boys walk away from Black Lives Matter Plaza after police officers turned them away from counterprotesters. **Dee Dwyer for NPR hide caption**

toggle caption
Dee Dwyer for NPR

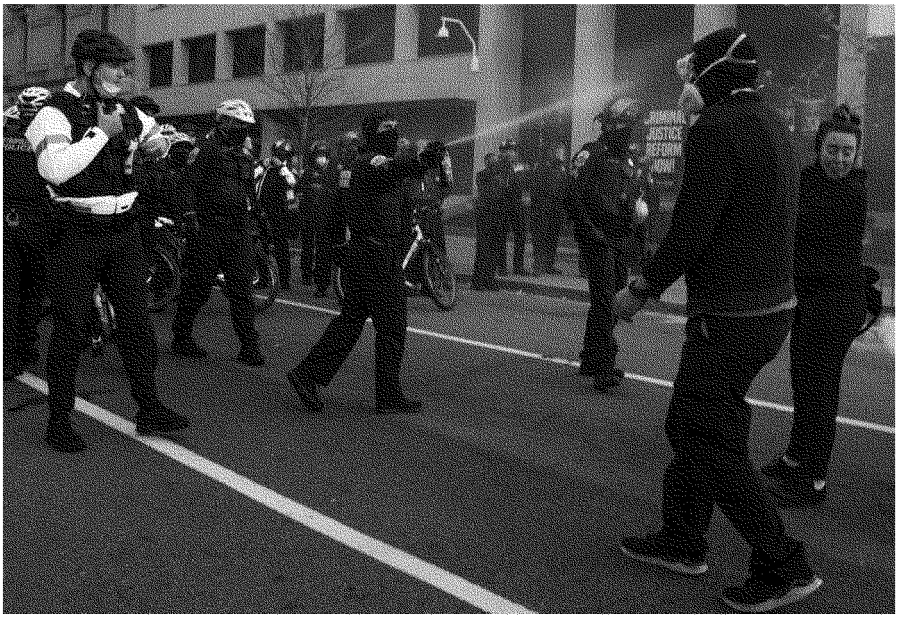


Proud Boys walk away from Black Lives Matter Plaza after police officers turned them away from counterprotesters.

Dee Dwyer for NPR

Meanwhile, local Black Lives Matter activists and allies gathered in response at the city's Black Lives Matter Plaza, a center for activism since the summer.

"We're not counterprotesting," said Anthony Lorenzo Green, an organizer with Black Lives Matter's D.C. chapter. Green told DCist, "We're really just trying to create spaces of liberation so folks don't feel oppressed or bothered or feel like, you know, 'Why are these folks coming to our city bringing this type of violence to our city?' We're pushing back against that, saying, 'No, this is D.C. This is who we are, we're resilient and we're going to have our joy in the midst of all that may be going on in the city.' "



Tyrone Turner/WAMU



Police scuffle with counterprotesters during a confrontation at Black Lives Matter Plaza.
Tyrone Turner/WAMU hide caption

toggle caption
Tyrone Turner/WAMU



A counterprotester gets treatment after an irritant was sprayed into his eyes by police.
Tyrone Turner/WAMU hide caption

toggle caption
Tyrone Turner/WAMU



Trump supporters argue with counterprotesters, expressing that Trump will have four more years as president. **Dee Dwyer for NPR hide caption**

toggle caption
Dee Dwyer for NPR



Proud Boys scream at counterprotesters near McPherson Square. Police separated the two groups. **Tyrone Turner/WAMU hide caption**

toggle caption
Tyrone Turner/WAMU
On Friday, according to WAMU, Trump supporters and counterprotesters clashed at Black Lives Matter Plaza, which led to several arrests.

Hours after last month's rally, Trump supporters brawled with counterprotesters, with at least one person stabbed, two police officers injured and at least 20 arrests.

Demonstrators are gathering at a time when coronavirus cases have been surging in Washington, D.C., as in most of the United States. As in November, many participants in the pro-Trump gathering were seen without masks or face coverings.



Trump supporters stand with the Proud Boys near Lafayette Square. **Dee Dwyer for NPR**
hide caption

toggle caption
Dee Dwyer for NPR



Members of the Proud Boys stand in front of Lafayette Square. **Dee Dwyer for NPR hide caption**

toggle caption
Dee Dwyer for NPR



Tyrone Turner/WAMU

- Million Maga
- 2020 election

Twitch disables Trump's account indefinitely

theverge.com/2021/1/7/22219144/twitch-trump-ban-indefinitely-capitol-attack

Jay Peters January 7, 2021





Illustration by Alex Castro / The Verge

Twitch has disabled President Donald Trump's account indefinitely following his encouragement of a pro-Trump mob's attack of the US Capitol on Wednesday.

"In light of yesterday's shocking attack on the Capitol, we have disabled President Trump's Twitch channel," a Twitch spokesperson said in a statement. "Given the current extraordinary circumstances and the President's incendiary rhetoric, we believe this is a necessary step to protect our community and prevent Twitch from being used to incite further violence." The company says it will reassess Trump's account after he leaves office.

Trump's account remains live, so archived videos and his profile are still available. But while the account is disabled, he won't be able to stream.

In June, Twitch temporarily banned Trump's account for "hateful conduct" that was aired on his stream. The ban was lifted after two weeks. On Wednesday evening, Twitch deleted the well-known PogChamp emote because the person on whose face it was based made statements "encouraging further violence after what took place in the Capitol today," according to Twitch. The streaming platform plans to work with the community to design a new emote.

Earlier on Thursday, Facebook placed an indefinite ban on Trump's account and said the ban would not be lifted before Inauguration Day. Twitter locked Trump's account Wednesday evening and said that further violations of its policies will result in a "permanent suspension" of his account.

***Update January 7th, 2:34PM ET**: Trump's account is still live, so the account has not been entirely banned. We have updated the headline to reflect this.*

Next Up In Policy

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‘It was like looking at evil’: The Capitol attack through the eyes of the Massachusetts delegation

By **Jazmine Ulloa and Steve Annear** Globe Staff,Updated January 12, 2021, 8:46 p.m.
149



People sheltered in the House gallery as rioters tried to break into the House Chamber at the US Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington.ANDREW HARNIK/ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — On the day Congress was set to count the electoral votes certifying President-elect Joe Biden’s victory, Representative Seth Moulton was one of the first members of the Massachusetts delegation to arrive at his office on Capitol Hill.

From his office window at about 7:30 a.m. last Wednesday, the Marine veteran uneasily watched a small, "ragtag" group of Capitol Police officers get briefed on the day's events. Meanwhile, in her own office in a nearby building later that morning, Representative Lori Trahan unpacked crackers, grapes, and other snacks as she and two staff members prepared to hunker down for a long and contentious day ahead.

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As supporters of President Trump descended upon downtown, Representative Jim McGovern walked to the Capitol alone. "I told my staff to stay home," he said, worried after reading about the online threats of violence.

RELATED: **Timeline: How Trump-supporting rioters stormed the Capitol**

They were following the instructions from Capitol Police: Arrive early, remain indoors, and use the underground network of tunnels to move throughout the Capitol complex. Those basic guidelines offered a hint of danger from the Trump rally outside of the White House, but no sense of anything like the deadly attack that was to come.



On the House floor, one of Speaker Nancy Pelosi's aides asked Representative Jim McGovern to take over in the speaker's chair. He figured she just needed to take some calls in her office. "I don't think she even knew what was about to happen because she left her phone there," he said.STEFANI REYNOLDS/GETTY

For days, Massachusetts lawmakers said, they and their colleagues had received assurances from police that security would be tight and that they would be shielded from the masses as Trump continued to spout lies and conspiracies, refusing to concede his loss in November. But incited by Trump's words, the rally morphed into a protest that escalated into an armed insurrection to overturn the election, rattling the world and now embroiling lawmakers in efforts to try to remove Trump from office in his final days.

The traumatic events of a day now etched in history are the backdrop for Wednesday's House impeachment vote.

RELATED: **House urges Pence to remove Trump from power using 25th Amendment**

Those early hours a week ago were ominous yet quiet.

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After a workout at a gym in the Capitol Complex, Moulton watched the group of officers before heading out to meet a friend for breakfast off grounds. "They had no riot gear," he said. "It seemed like they were preparing for something very routine."

That's what Representative Stephen Lynch was expecting as he fielded questions from reporters in the lobby outside House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office.

"Living four days a week in D.C. over the last 20 years, you see a lot of protests," Lynch said. "There's a certain rhythm to the district. So I wasn't alarmed."

But Representative Ayanna Pressley had two reasons to be afraid: She has alopecia, an autoimmune disorder that puts her in the high-risk category for coronavirus, and she is one of four Democratic representatives in a group self-dubbed "The Squad," which has drawn ire and racist attacks from Trump and his supporters.

Because of multiple death threats over the past two years, running through safety drills and threat scenarios has become routine at Pressley's office, said Sarah Groh, her chief of staff. Groh, Pressley, and her husband had planned to wait in Pressley's D.C. apartment until later in the afternoon. That changed as the House sergeant-at-arms pressured lawmakers to come sooner, warning the crowds could get too thick to safely escort them in.

RELATED: **Military leaders decry Capitol attack in memo to forces**

"I was deeply concerned," Groh said of going to the Capitol complex. "It felt like the heat was being turned up in terms of the rhetoric and Trump's aims to incite violence."

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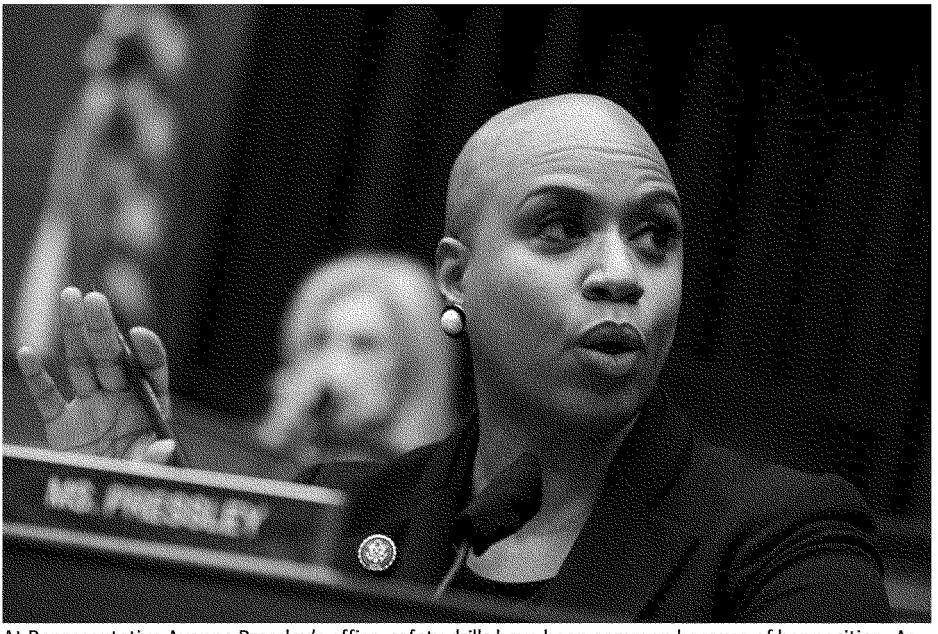
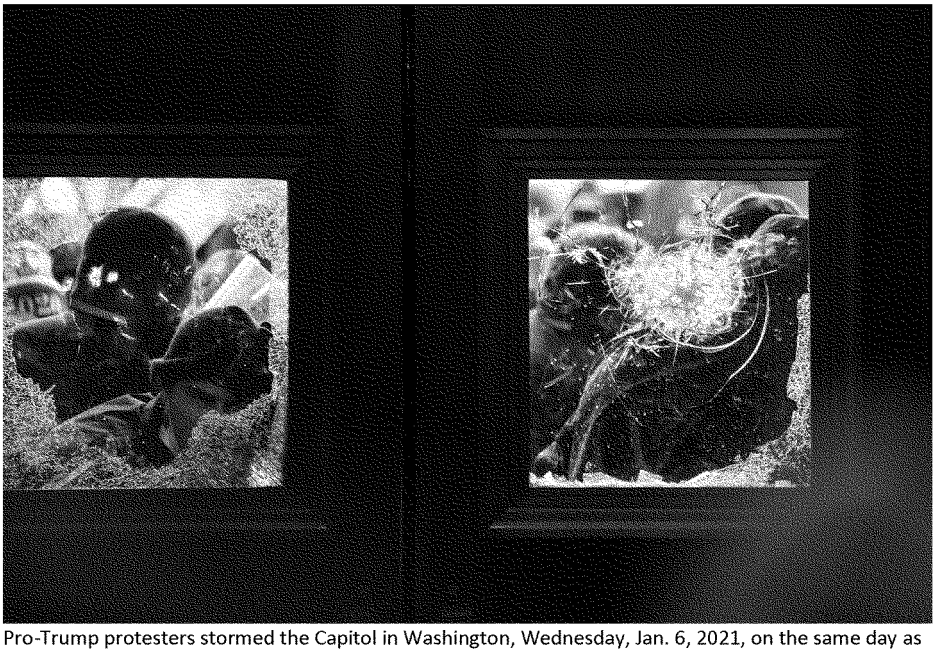


At Representative Ayanna Pressley's office, safety drills have been common because of her position. As the threat became clear Wednesday, staffers barricaded the entrance of her office.TOM WILLIAMS/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Most members could pinpoint the time when the roar of protesters outside grew louder: It was as the president wrapped up his speech on a makeshift stage between the White House and the Washington Memorial. The long diatribe had included a litany of false election claims, attacks on political enemies, and pleas to supporters to "walk down to the Capitol."

As protesters streamed toward Capitol Hill, Moulton's special assistant, Billy Hennessy, kept a window open. He poked his head out every so often to watch the group massing outside the Capitol. Soon, he saw some Trump supporters fleeing with blood on their faces.

"I was hearing a lot of cheers, a lot of screaming, a lot of chanting," he said. "And it went from chanting and screaming to gas canisters being shot and exploding to what sounded like bullets being fired all within a matter of 20 to 30 minutes."



Pro-Trump protesters stormed the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, on the same day as a joint session of Congress met to certify the electoral votes from the 2020 presidential election. ERIN SCHAFF/NYT

On the House floor, one of Pelosi's aides asked McGovern to take over in the speaker's chair. He figured she just needed to take some calls in her office.

"I don't think she even knew what was about to happen because she left her phone there," he said. But after a few minutes McGovern was forced to adjourn the House when it became clear Pelosi wasn't going back to her office but was being evacuated.

RELATED: **A Colorado Republican tweeted about Pelosi's location during the Capitol siege. She's now facing calls to resign**

He was soon relaying information from officers to those in the chamber about how to put on gas masks and safely exit the room. The House chaplain uttered some prayerful words, as he and others tried to keep people calm.

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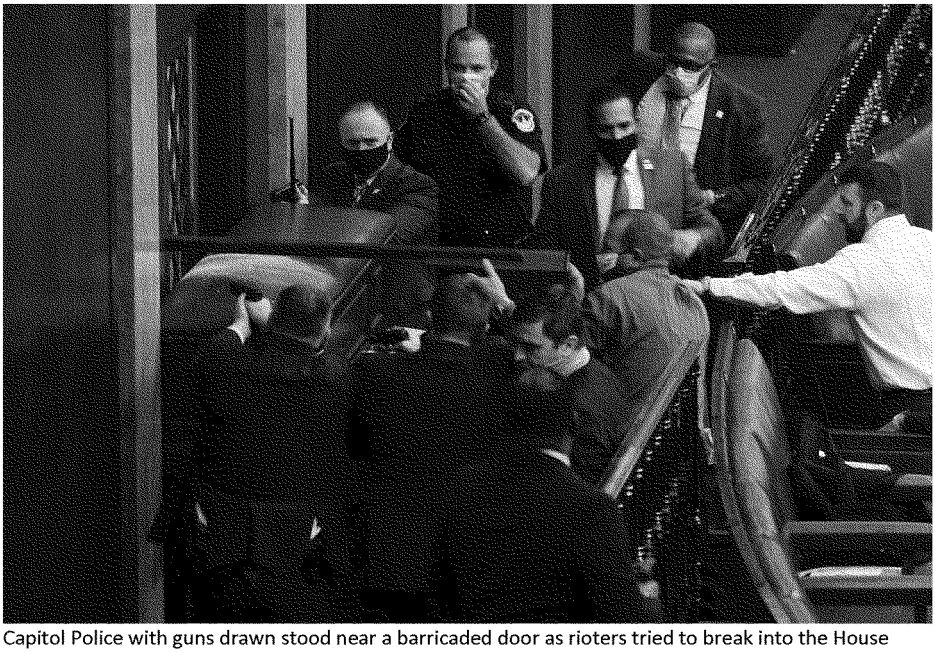
One of the last of roughly 50 members swept out of the House chamber, McGovern saw rioters had shattered windows in the adjacent lobby and were banging on the doors.

"It was like looking at evil," the Worcester Democrat said.

In videos since released, McGovern is seen just moments before one of the rioters, Air Force veteran Ashli Babbitt, 35, attempts to jump in through a broken window and is fatally shot by police. McGovern said he probably heard those shots, but didn't register them in the din of shouts from protesters and commands from officers as he escaped down a marble staircase.

RELATED: **McGovern condemns 'hate,' 'evil' of Capitol rioters and assails GOP's Jim Jordan for giving them 'oxygen'**

"It was a horrific day," McGovern said. "I just assumed that the noise we were hearing outside the chamber was just a handful of people. I couldn't imagine that entire mob could gain access to the Capitol."



Capitol Police with guns drawn stood near a barricaded door as rioters tried to break into the House Chamber at the US Capitol on Jan. 6.ANDREW HARNIK/ASSOCIATED PRESS

As people rushed out of other buildings on the Capitol grounds, staffers in Pressley's office barricaded the entrance with furniture and water jugs that had piled up during the pandemic. Groh pulled out gas masks and looked for the special panic buttons in the office.

"Every panic button in my office had been torn out — the whole unit," she said, though they could come up with no rationale as to why. She had used them before and hadn't switched offices since then. As they were escorted to several different secure locations, Groh and Pressley and her husband tried to remain calm and vigilant — not only of rioters but of officers they did not know or trust, she said.

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In her office in another building, Trahan bolted the doors as she toggled between feeling sad and outraged. As she and her staffers watched the mob on television, Trahan said, she remembered how her husband and two daughters had stood on the same steps of the Capitol just days before. She was relieved her family had gone back to Massachusetts.

"You feel like a sitting duck, you feel vulnerable," Trahan said of the hours sheltering in place with little to no information from Capitol Police.



"You feel like a sitting duck, you feel vulnerable," Massachusetts Democratic state Representative Lori Trahan said of the hours sheltering in place with little to no information from Capitol Police.STEVEN SENNE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lynch eventually made the quick walk back to his apartment after sheltering for some time at one of the Capitol buildings.

Representative William Keating hustled back to his office from the underground Capitol tunnels when he heard security officers were rushing evacuees to his building.

A former prosecutor who had previously served on the Homeland Security committee, he had walked the grounds with Capitol Police the evening before to learn more about their plans. He received assurances that security would be tight and their perimeter would be wide enough to keep protesters away from the building.

"I was given some confidence by the discussions I had, which I think was sincere from the front line people that they had this under check," he said. But as rioters stormed in Wednesday, it became "very clear that the planning was an abysmal failure."

Back in his office, Moulton did a couple of media interviews.



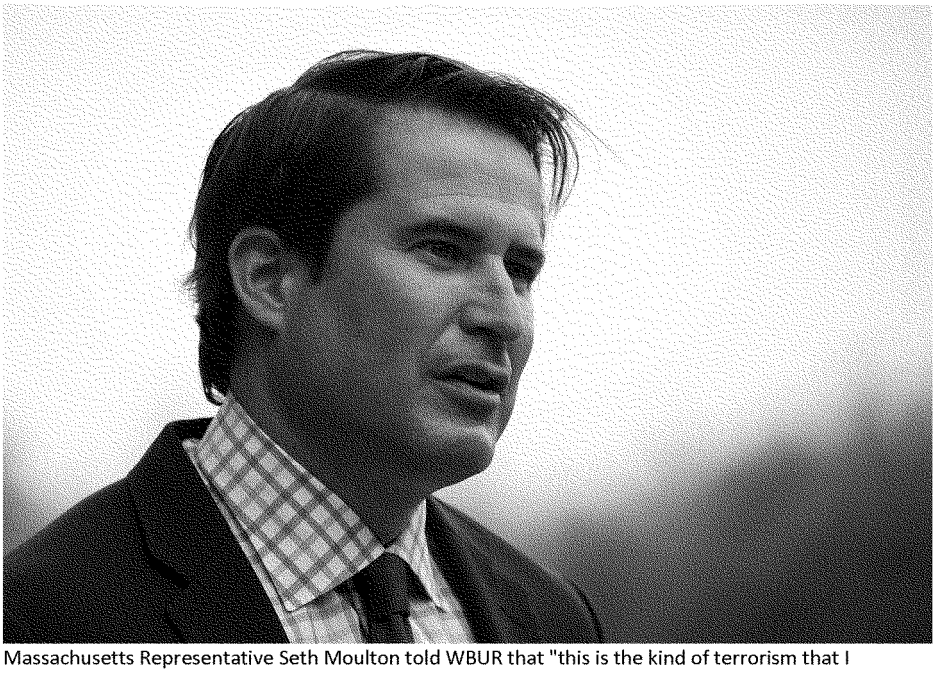
Supporters of President Trump sat at desks in the office suite of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi after breaching the US Capitol in Washington, DC, on January 6, 2021. SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

"This is the kind of violence, this is the kind of terrorism that I expected to see in Iraq as a United States Marine, not here in Washington, D.C., not an attempted coup on our own country," he told WBUR.

At one point, Moulton called a friend in the FBI and urged him to get his unit to the Capitol, but it would be hours before they would be given the green light. Moulton and Hennessy were taken to the secret location where other House members were sheltering.

It was there that Trahan learned about the acts of bravery during the attack: the combat veterans like Representative Ruben Gallegos of Arizona, who had helped elderly and scared members put on their gas masks as they fled. It was there that Pressley and other colleagues started drafting articles of impeachment. And it was there that resolve grew among members to return and finish the vote count.

"The experiences of Wednesday were harrowing and unfortunately very familiar in the deepest and most ancestral way," Pressley told Joy Reid on MSNBC. "And so of course I'm fearful, but that fear is not new."



Massachusetts Representative Seth Moulton told WBUR that "this is the kind of terrorism that I expected to see in Iraq as a United States Marine, not here in Washington, D.C., not an attempted coup on our own country."JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

On the Senate floor later that night, Senator Elizabeth Warren spoke of the failed presidential runs she and her colleagues had experienced.

"We didn't throw temper tantrums," she said of their election losses. "We didn't feed poisonous propaganda to our supporters. We didn't urge people to march on state capitals or to descend on Washington. We accepted the will of the voters."

RELATED: **Here's what you need to know about President Trump's likely second impeachment**

In the days since, some members of the Massachusetts delegation said they have received more threats from Trump supporters, and many are concerned

about violence breaking out on or before Inauguration Day next week. All have ramped up their calls for investigations into the security breakdowns and accountability against Trump and the Republican lawmakers who they said fanned the flames of hate and white supremacy.

Keating, who was one of the last House Democrats from Massachusetts to sign on to impeachment against Trump in 2019, said this time it is "clear cut."

On a phone call, he laid out the facts in the dry manner of a prosecutor: "We are members of Congress — we are human, but importantly, we are instruments of the government doing our jobs, and this was an attempt to stop that from happening."

Biden no longer taking Amtrak to inauguration amid security concerns

cnn.com/2021/01/13/politics/biden-amtrak-inauguration-security/index.html

January 13, 2021



*(CNN)*President-elect Joe Biden will no longer take the Amtrak to Washington next week to be sworn in as president, two officials familiar with the planning tell CNN, a sudden change that comes amid dramatically heightened security surrounding the inauguration.

A decision was made this week for Biden not to take the 90-minute ride from his namesake station in Wilmington, Delaware, officials said, with at least some of the concerns hinging on his arrival at Union Station in Washington, which is only blocks from the now heavily fortified US Capitol.

Biden previously had instructed his team to keep moving forward with the plans for inauguration, including taking the Amtrak, and to not be deterred by the deadly riot at the US Capitol last week or by complications caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

But since then, the security concerns have intensified, as more has been learned about the attack on the Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump, which left five people dead, and the potential threats surrounding the January 20 inauguration.

Biden on Wednesday received a briefing from senior officials at the FBI, the Secret Service and key members of his national security team about the potential for additional extremist violence in the coming days, the President-elect's transition team said in a statement.

Read More

"In the week since the attack on Congress by a mob that included domestic terrorists and violent extremists, the nation has continued to learn more about the threat to our democracy and about the potential for additional violence in the coming days, both in the National Capital Region and in cities across the country," the statement from the transition team reads. "This is a challenge that the President-elect and his team take incredibly seriously."

Biden's transition team is engaging with the Trump administration to "gain as much information as possible on the threat picture, and on the preparations being put in place to deter and defend against violent disruptions or attacks," according to the statement.

Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris are still expected to take their oaths of office on the West Front of the US Capitol at a significantly scaled-down event. Biden said this week that he was "not afraid of taking the oath outside" and that his team had been receiving briefings in the wake of the violence.

More than 20,000 National Guard troops could be in Washington to help secure Biden's inauguration, Washington Police Chief Robert Contee said Wednesday, and sources tell CNN that officials are considering raising the terrorism threat level. The US Secret Service on Wednesday officially took charge of security for Biden's inauguration, working in coordination with federal law enforcement agencies and the Pentagon.

The transition has called for swift Senate hearings and confirmations for Biden's national security nominees, stressing the importance of "continuous command and control across the homeland security and law enforcement components of the U.S. government."

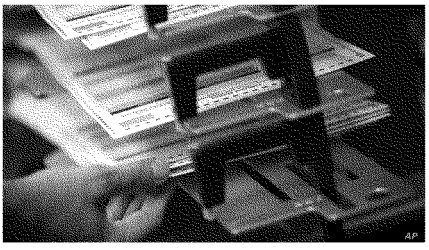
The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has scheduled a confirmation hearing for Alejandro Mayorkas, Biden's pick for Homeland Security secretary, next Tuesday. Biden's pick for defense secretary, retired Gen. Lloyd Austin, also has a confirmation hearing scheduled for next Tuesday. Austin will require a congressional waiver before he is confirmed.

CNN's Zachary Cohen and Geneva Sands contributed to this report.

2020 USA Votes

Trump Renews 'Rigged Election' Claim Against All Evidence

By Jeff Seldin
November 13, 2020 04:24 PM



President Donald Trump persisted Friday in claiming the U.S. presidential election was rigged despite assurances from federal and state officials, and private industry partners, that the November 3 vote was the "most secure" in the nation's history.

Trump, who has yet to concede the election to the projected winner, former Democratic Vice President Joe Biden, has repeatedly taken to Twitter to assert, without evidence, that fraud and other irregularities deprived him of millions of votes.

On Friday, Trump renewed his push to delegitimize the election results, accusing rival Democrats of both hypocrisy and, seemingly, of finding ways to bypass security measures his administration had put in place.

"For years the Dems have been preaching how unsafe and rigged our elections have been. Now they are saying what a wonderful job the Trump Administration did in making 2020 the most secure election ever," the president tweeted.

"Actually this is true, except for what the Democrats did," he added. "Rigged Election!"

Trump's tweet, which Twitter labeled as "disputed," came after a coalition of federal and state officials, including his administration's own Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), issued a staunch defense of their efforts. They were joined in the statement by voting equipment manufacturers, voting software companies and civic groups.

"The November 3rd election was the most secure in American history," said the statement from the Election Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council (GCC) Executive Committee and the Election Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Council.

"While we know there are many unfounded claims and opportunities for misinformation about the process of our elections, we can assure you we have the utmost confidence in the security and integrity of our elections, and you should, too," they said. "There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes or was in any way compromised."

> **"JUST IN: US election officials -from @CISAgov & from the states- doubling down on the security of #Election2020**
>
> **Nov 3rd "was the most secure in American history...no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes**

or was in any way compromised"
https://t.co/HrSxnE3DqT

— Jeff Seldin (@jseldin) November 12, 2020

The president and election officials have been engaged in a battle for public perception since the polls closed and deadlines for mail ballots passed last week.

Trump's campaign team has filed multiple lawsuits across the country, alleging improper balloting procedures and voter fraud. Even as many of the suits have been thrown out for lack of evidence, the president's supporters have continued to make allegations on social media and in interviews with the news media.

State election officials, in the meantime, have pushed back, using news releases and social media accounts to shoot down rumors and disinformation.

CISA, which spearheaded election security efforts, has waged a counter-disinformation campaign of its own, using social media to steer Americans to its Rumor Control website, where it has sought to debunk rumors, like those alleging that a bad actor could alter ballots or vote tallies without being detected or that dead people were able to cast votes.

Those efforts appear to have sparked the president's ire.



The Reuters news agency on Thursday, citing three sources familiar with the matter, reported that CISA Director Christopher Krebs had told associates that

he expected the White House to fire him, in part for refusing to remove or change information on the Rumor Control website.

Neither CISA nor the White House responded to VOA requests for comment. But word that Krebs could be on the way out sparked an outcry from state election officials, lawmakers and former officials.

"Director Krebs and the many other CISA staffers we interact with have been invaluable partners in further securing election infrastructure and sharing vital information," said Maria Benson, speaking for the National Association of Secretaries of State, in an email to VOA.

> **"MORE reaction to the reports that @CISAKrebs will be fired - this from the fomer #2 at @ODNIgov @suemgordon22 https://t.co/TxCHrckVvu**
>
> **— Jeff Seldin (@jseldin) November 12, 2020**

Democrat Mark Warner, the vice chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, was even more direct.

"Chris Krebs has done a great job protecting our elections. He is one of the few people in this administration respected by everyone on both sides of the aisle," Warner posted on Twitter. "There is no possible justification to remove him from office. None."

Krebs himself has been active on social media, pushing back against what CISA has labeled disinformation, urging Americans, "Don't fall for it."

> **To be crystal clear on [↓], I'm specifically referring to the Hammer and Scorecard nonsense. It's just that - nonsense. This is not a real thing, don't fall for it and think 2x before you share. #Protect2020 https://t.co/f2FpSbRXKy**
>
> **— Chris Krebs #Protect2020 (@CISAKrebs) November 7, 2020**

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Top CEOs Met to Plan Response to Trump's Election Denial

On Nov. 6, more than two dozen CEOs of major US corporations took part in a video conference to discuss what to do if Trump refuses to leave office or takes other steps to stay in power

By **Associated Press**
Fri, 11/13/2020 - 03:09 PM

2020 USA Votes

No Voting System Deleted or Lost Votes in US Election, Security Groups Say

Republican President Donald Trump has repeatedly made unsubstantiated claims of electoral fraud and has yet to concede

By **Reuters**
Thu, 11/12/2020 - 08:53 PM

2020 USA Votes

Biden Deems Trump's Refusal to Concede Election Loss 'Embarrassment'

Presumptive US president brushes aside concern over lack of transition cooperation from Trump administration



By **Ken Bredemeier**
Tue, 11/10/2020 - 07:57 PM



By
Jeff Seldin
National Security Correspondent

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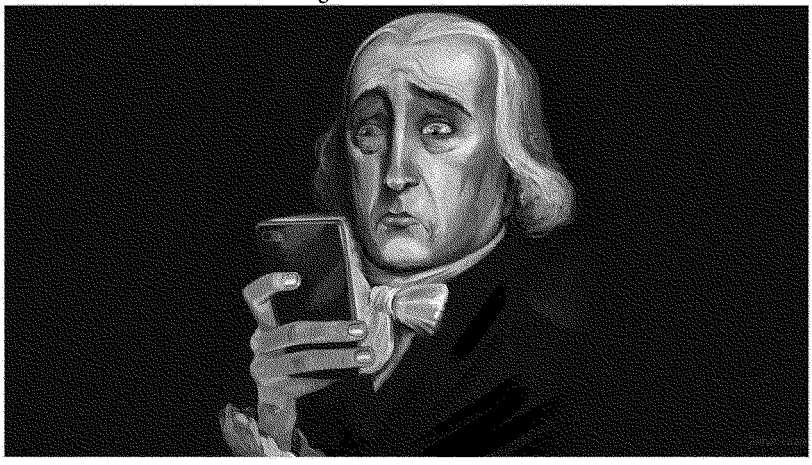
America Is Living James Madison's Nightmare

The Founders designed a government that would resist mob rule. They didn't anticipate how strong the mob could become.



Story by Jeffrey Rosen

OCTOBER 2018 ISSUE

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Editor's Note: This article is part of a series that attempts to answer the question: Is democracy dying?

JAMES MADISON TRAVELED to Philadelphia in 1787 with Athens on his mind. He had spent the year before the Constitutional Convention reading two trunkfuls of books on the history of failed democracies, sent to him from Paris by Thomas Jefferson. Madison was determined, in drafting the Constitution, to avoid the fate of those "ancient and modern confederacies," which he believed had succumbed to rule by demagogues and mobs.

TheAtlantic - Madison vs The Mob - The Atlan...

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Madison's reading convinced him that direct democracies—such as the assembly in Athens, where 6,000 citizens were required for a quorum—unleashed populist passions that overcame the cool, deliberative reason prized above all by Enlightenment thinkers. "In all very numerous assemblies, of whatever characters composed, passion never fails to wrest the sceptre from reason," he argued in *The Federalist Papers*, the essays he wrote (along with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay) to build support for the ratification of the Constitution. "Had every Athenian citizen been a Socrates, every Athenian assembly would still have been a mob."

Madison and Hamilton believed that Athenian citizens had been swayed by crude and ambitious politicians who had played on their emotions. The demagogue Cleon was said to have seduced the assembly into being more hawkish toward Athens's opponents in the Peloponnesian War, and even the reformer Solon canceled debts and debased the currency. In Madison's view, history seemed to be repeating itself in America. After the Revolutionary War, he had observed in Massachusetts "a rage for paper money, for abolition of debts, for an equal division of property." That populist rage had led to Shays's Rebellion, which pitted a band of debtors against their creditors.

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of interest, adversed to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community." Factions arise, he believed, when public opinion forms and spreads quickly. But they can dissolve if the public is given time and space to consider long-term interests rather than short-term gratification.

To prevent factions from distorting public policy and threatening liberty, Madison resolved to exclude the people from a direct role in government. "A pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction," Madison wrote in "Federalist No. 10." The Framers designed the American constitutional system not as a direct democracy but as a representative republic, where enlightened delegates of the people would serve the public good. They also built into the Constitution a series of cooling mechanisms intended to inhibit the formulation of passionate factions, to ensure that reasonable majorities would prevail.

The people would directly elect the members of the House of Representatives, but the popular passions of the House would cool in the "Senatorial saucer," as George Washington purportedly called it: The Senate would comprise natural aristocrats chosen by state legislators rather than elected by the people. And rather than directly electing the chief executive, the people would vote for wise electors—that is, propertied white men—who would ultimately choose a president of the highest character and most discerning judgment. The separation of powers, meanwhile, would prevent any one branch of government from acquiring too much authority. The further division of power between the federal and state governments would ensure that none of the three branches of government could claim that it alone represented the people.

According to classical theory, republics could exist only in relatively small territories, where citizens knew one another personally and could assemble face-to-face. Plato would have capped the number of citizens capable of self-government at 5,040. Madison, however, thought Plato's small-republic thesis was wrong. He believed that the ease of communication in small republics was

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variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other." Madison predicted that America's vast geography and large population would prevent passionate mobs from mobilizing. Their dangerous energy would burn out before it could inflame others.

Of course, at the time of the country's founding, new media technologies, including what Madison called "a circulation of newspapers through the entire body of the people," were already closing the communication gaps among the dispersed citizens of America. The popular press of the 18th and early 19th centuries was highly partisan—the *National Gazette*, where Madison himself published his thoughts on the media, was, since its founding in 1791, an organ of the Democratic-Republican Party and often viciously attacked the Federalists.

But newspapers of the time were also platforms for elites to make thoughtful arguments at length, and Madison believed that the enlightened journalists he called the "literati" would ultimately promote the "commerce of ideas." He had faith that citizens would take the time to read complicated arguments (including the essays that became *The Federalist Papers*), allowing levelheaded reason to spread slowly across the new republic.

JAMES MADISON DIED at Montpelier, his Virginia estate, in 1836, one of the few Founding Fathers to survive into the democratic age of Andrew Jackson. Madison supported Jackson's efforts to preserve the Union against nullification efforts in the South but was alarmed by his populist appeal in the West. What would Madison make of American democracy today, an era in which Jacksonian populism looks restrained by comparison? Madison's worst fears of mob rule have been realized—and the cooling mechanisms he designed to slow down the formation of impetuous majorities have broken.

The polarization of Congress, reflecting an electorate that has not been this divided since about the time of the Civil War, has led to ideological warfare

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constituents and donors—precisely the type of factionalism the Founders abhorred.

The executive branch, meanwhile, has been transformed by the spectacle of tweeting presidents, though the presidency had broken from its constitutional restraints long before the advent of social media. During the election of 1912, the progressive populists Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson insisted that the president derived his authority directly from the people. Since then, the office has moved in precisely the direction the Founders had hoped to avoid: Presidents now make emotional appeals, communicate directly with voters, and pander to the mob.

Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms have accelerated public discourse to warp speed, creating virtual versions of the mob. Inflammatory posts based on passion travel farther and faster than arguments based on reason. Rather than encouraging deliberation, mass media undermine it by creating bubbles and echo chambers in which citizens see only those opinions they already embrace.

We are living, in short, in a Madisonian nightmare. How did we get here, and how can we escape?

From the very beginning, the devices that the Founders hoped would prevent the rapid mobilization of passionate majorities didn't work in all the ways they expected. After the election of 1800, the Electoral College, envisioned as a group of independent sages, became little more than a rubber stamp for the presidential nominees of the newly emergent political parties.

The Founders' greatest failure of imagination was in not anticipating the rise of mass political parties. The first parties played an unexpected cooling function, uniting diverse economic and regional interests through shared constitutional visions. After the presidential election of 1824, Martin Van Buren reconceived the Democratic Party as a coalition that would defend strict construction of the Constitution and states' rights in the name of the people, in contrast to the Federalist Party, which had controlled the federal courts, represented the monied

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century—from the abolition of slavery to the Progressive movement—were the product of strong and diverse political parties.

Whatever benefits the parties offered in the 19th and early 20th centuries, however, have long since disappeared. The moderating effects of parties were undermined by a series of populist reforms, including the direct election of senators, the popular-ballot initiative, and direct primaries in presidential elections, which became widespread in the 1970s.

More recently, geographical and political self-sorting has produced voters and representatives who are willing to support the party line at all costs. After the Republicans took both chambers of Congress in 1994, the House of Representatives, under Speaker Newt Gingrich, adjusted its rules to enforce party discipline, taking power away from committee chairs and making it easier for leadership to push bills into law with little debate or support from across the aisle. The defining congressional achievements of Barack Obama's presidency and, thus far, Donald Trump's presidency—the Affordable Care Act of 2010 and the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, respectively—were passed with no votes from members of the minority party.

Madison feared that Congress would be the most dangerous branch of the federal government, sucking power into its "impetuous vortex." But today he would shudder at the power of the executive branch. The rise of what the presidential historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. called the "imperial presidency" has unbalanced the equilibrium among the three branches. Modern presidents rule by executive order rather than consulting with Congress. They direct a massive administrative state, with jurisdiction over everything from environmental policy to the regulation of the airwaves. Trump's populist promise—"I alone can fix it"—is only the most dramatic in a long history of hyperbolic promises, made by presidents from Wilson to Obama, in order to mobilize their most ideologically extreme voters.

During the 20th century, the Supreme Court also became both more powerful and more divided. The Court struck down federal laws two times in the first 70

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1987, the Court became increasingly polarized between justices appointed by Republican presidents and justices appointed by Democratic presidents. Kennedy's retirement raises the likelihood of more constitutional rulings split between five Republican appointees and four Democratic ones.

Exacerbating all this political antagonism is the development that might distress Madison the most: media polarization, which has allowed geographically dispersed citizens to isolate themselves into virtual factions, communicating only with like-minded individuals and reinforcing shared beliefs. Far from being a conduit for considered opinions by an educated elite, social-media platforms spread misinformation and inflame partisan differences. Indeed, people on Facebook and Twitter are *more* likely to share inflammatory posts that appeal to emotion than intricate arguments based on reason. The passions, hyper-partisanship, and split-second decision making that Madison feared from large, concentrated groups meeting face-to-face have proved to be even more dangerous from exponentially larger, dispersed groups that meet online.

Is there any hope of resurrecting Madison's vision of majority rule based on reason rather than passion? Unless the Supreme Court reinterprets the First Amendment, allowing the government to require sites like Twitter and Facebook to suppress polarizing speech that falls short of intentional incitement to violence—an ill-advised and, at the moment, thankfully unlikely prospect—any efforts to encourage deliberation on those platforms will have to come from the platforms themselves. For the moment, they have adopted an unsatisfying mash-up of American and European approaches to free speech: Mark Zuckerberg provoked controversy recently when he said Facebook wouldn't remove posts denying the existence of the Holocaust, because determining the intent of the poster was impossible, but would continue to ban hate speech that the First Amendment protects.

Still, some promising, if modest, fixes are on the horizon. Nathaniel Persily, a professor at Stanford Law School who leads an independent commission that will examine the impact of Facebook on democracy, notes one step the company has taken to address the problem of "clickbait," which lures users with sensational

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Facebook's News Feed. The company now prioritizes those articles users have actually taken the time to read.

But these and other solutions could have First Amendment implications. "The democratic character of the internet is itself posing a threat to democracy, and there's no clear solution to the problem," Persily told me. "Censorship, delay, demotion of information online, deterrence, and dilution of bad content—all pose classic free-speech problems, and everyone should be concerned at every step of the government regulatory parade."

Of course, the internet can empower democratic deliberation as well as threaten it, allowing dissenters to criticize the government in ways the Founders desired. The internet has also made American democracy more inclusive than it was in the Founders' day, amplifying the voices of women, minorities, and other disadvantaged groups they excluded. And although our national politics is deadlocked by partisanship, compromise remains possible at the local level, where activism—often organized online—can lead to real change.

Federalism remains the most robust and vibrant Madisonian cooling mechanism, and continues to promote ideological diversity. At the moment, the combination of low voter turnout and ideological extremism has tended to favor very liberal or very conservative candidates in primaries. Thanks to safe districts created by geographic self-sorting and partisan gerrymandering, many of these extremists go on to win the general election. Today, all congressional Republicans fall to the right of the most conservative Democrat, and all congressional Democrats fall to the left of the most liberal Republican. In the 1960s, at times, 50 percent of the lawmakers overlapped ideologically.

Voters in several states are experimenting with alternative primary systems that might elect more moderate representatives. California and Washington State have adopted a "top two" system, in which candidates from both parties compete in a nonpartisan primary, and the two candidates who get the most votes run against each other in the general election—even if they're from the same party. States, which Louis Brandeis called "laboratories of democracy," are proving to be the

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The best way of promoting a return to Madisonian principles, however, may be one Madison himself identified: constitutional education. In recent years, calls for more civic education have become something of a national refrain. But the Framers themselves believed that the fate of the republic depended on an educated citizenry. Drawing again on his studies of ancient republics, which taught that broad education of citizens was the best security against "crafty and dangerous encroachments on the public liberty," Madison insisted that the rich should subsidize the education of the poor.

These are dangerous times: The percentage of people who say it is "essential" to live in a liberal democracy is plummeting.

To combat the power of factions, the Founders believed the people had to be educated about the structures of government in particular. "A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps both," Madison wrote in 1822, supporting the Kentucky legislature's "Plan of Education embracing every class of Citizens." In urging Congress to create a national university in 1796, George Washington said: "A primary object of such a national institution should be the education of our youth in the science of government."

The civics half of the educational equation is crucial. Recent studies have suggested that higher education can polarize citizens rather than ensuring the rule of reason: Highly educated liberals become more liberal, and highly educated conservatives more conservative. At the same time, the National Assessment of Educational Progress has found that citizens, whether liberal or conservative, who are educated about constitutional checks on direct democracy, such as an independent judiciary, are more likely to express trust in the courts and less likely to call for judicial impeachment or for overturning unpopular Supreme Court decisions.

These are dangerous times: The percentage of people who say it is "essential" to

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high among young people. In 1788, Madison wrote that the best argument for adopting a Bill of Rights would be its influence on public opinion. As "the political truths" declared in the Bill of Rights "become incorporated with the national sentiment," he concluded, they would "counteract the impulses of interest and passion." Today, passion has gotten the better of us. The preservation of the republic urgently requires imparting constitutional principles to a new generation and reviving Madisonian reason in an impetuous world.

This article appears in the October 2018 print edition with the headline "Madison vs. the Mob."

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ELECTION 2020 | Nov 29, 2020, 11:42am EST | 569,729 views

Trump Claims FBI And Justice Department May Have Helped Rig Election

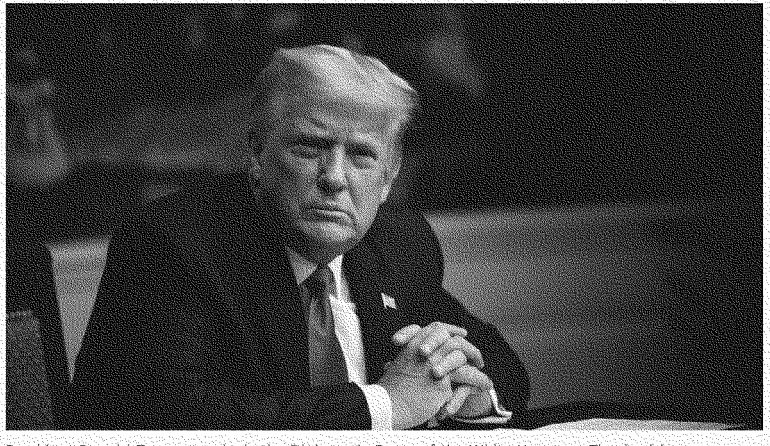


Jemima McEvoy Forbes Staff

Business

I'm a British-born reporter covering breaking news for Forbes.

TOPLINE Despite having finally assented to allowing his administration to cooperate with the transition of power to President-elect Joe Biden, President Trump on Sunday continued to spout baseless voter fraud claims in his first interview since Election Day, including suggesting that the FBI and Department of Justice were involved in rigging the election against him.



President Donald Trump speaks in the Diplomatic Room of the White House on Thanksgiving on November ... [+] GETTY IMAGES

KEY FACTS

- "This is total fraud," Trump told host Maria Bartiromo during the interview on Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures," adding: "And how the FBI and Department of Justice—I don't know—maybe they're involved, but how people are getting away with this stuff—it's unbelievable."

- The president offered no evidence to back up this claim, and then went on to complain at length about how the two agencies had been "missing in action" in investigating his voter fraud claims.

- The DOJ and FBI did not immediately respond to requests for comment from *Forbes*.

KEY BACKGROUND

The heads of both the FBI and DOJ were picked by President Trump. FBI Director Christopher Wray was appointed by the president in 2017, while Attorney General William Barr was nominated in late 2018. Barr has been criticized for actions that have been perceived as overly partisan toward the president, including recently clearing the DOJ to investigate voting irregularities before the results are certified, a reversal of longstanding guidance to avoid the appearance of federal intervention in elections that prompted the head of the department's Election Crimes Branch Richard Pilger to step down from his position in protest.

CRUCIAL QUOTE

Almost all of the dozens of lawsuits filed by the Trump campaign in battleground states have been dismissed by judges—including GOP appointees. However, on Sunday morning, Trump claimed: "We're trying to put the evidence in and the judges won't allow us to do it."

FURTHER READING

"Trump And GSA Authorize Biden To Begin Presidential Transition" (Forbes)

"DOJ Prosecutors Say Barr's Authorization Of Voter Fraud Probes Is 'Not Based In Fact'" (Forbes)

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Jemima McEvoy

I'm a British-born reporter covering breaking news for Forbes.

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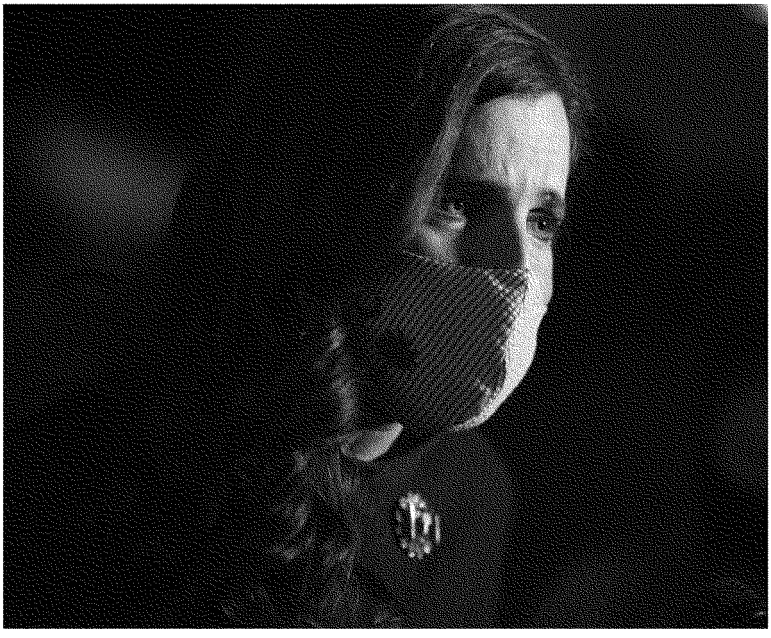
Nancy Mace's first 100 hours in Congress: threats, violence and challenging Trump

BY JENNIFER BERRY HAWES AND THOMAS NOVELLY JHAWES@POSTANDCOURIER.COM, TNOVELLY@POSTANDCOURIER.COM
JAN 7, 2021



Republican state Rep. Nancy Mace of South Carolina had been in office for roughly 100 hours and already had been yelled a new office while pro-Trump rioters stormed the Capitol building. File/Grace Beahm Alford/Staff

GRACE BEAHM ALFORD GBEAHM@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

When she collapsed onto the cold, leather couch in her new office around 4 a.m., Congresswoman Nancy Mace still wore a classic black romper, draped diagonally across one shoulder, selected for an elegant occasion.

Outside, rioters still plagued the streets of Washington, D.C.

Capitol police still patrolled in riot gear.

It was Thursday, and Mace felt unsafe returning to her hotel. What if rioters, who had just stormed and overtaken the Capitol building, were staying at her hotel? When she'd ventured outside a day earlier, an irate President Trump supporter had gotten in her face, shaking with rage over Mace's refusal to go along with fellow Republicans' plan to get Congress to overturn the election.

Taking that position wasn't popular. Since getting sworn in four days earlier, Mace had been yelled at, insulted, threatened.

She'd spent Wednesday huddled in someone's corner office, then stuck in a tunnel, then hunkered in her office with the lights off, her children texting her with worry.

Mace slept for two hours overnight. Then, grabbing her cellphone, she began to scroll.



NEWS

SC's congressional delegation safe as protesters in Washington storm Capitol building

BY THOMAS NOVELLY TNOVELLY@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

She watched videos of rioters assaulting law enforcement officers, shoving them into broken glass, chasing them up stairs, storming past them.

Four people had lost their lives at the time. A woman had been shot and killed right outside the House chamber. More than 50 officers were injured, including several who were hospitalized. One would later die.

Furious tears filled Mace's eyes.

She had arrived in D.C. as a Trump supporter. Now, she thought, members of her own party had caused this.

"Millions of Americans were lied to," she told The Post and Courier not long after waking up Thursday. "Millions of Americans were taken advantage of — their hearts, their minds and their wallets."

Her phone buzzed.

Fury she expressed about violence in one of America's most sacred places had struck a chord, vaulting her onto the national stage before she'd barely cast a vote. Overnight, the freshman congresswoman's words seemed everywhere, her face flashing from television screens across the nation.

Mace arrived in D.C. just a few days earlier, newly elected. Now it seemed every news outlet in the world wanted to talk to her.

She already had gotten coverage as the first Republican woman elected to Congress from South Carolina. But now, people applauded her prescience and courage. She'd gone on CNN, NPR, CBS, MSNBC. Nancy Mace was a national name.

She'd been a congresswoman for roughly 100 hours.



The House Chamber is empty after an evacuation as protesters breached the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington, D.C. J. Scott Applewhite/AP

J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE

Summoning courage

It was a momentous time. On Sunday, Mace, a 43-year-old single mother of two, swore to uphold the Constitution and became a member of the 116th Congress.

She had flown into D.C. the day before with her two children. Like so many kids during the coronavirus pandemic, they were enrolled in online school. They wanted to come see their mother, be with her during this historic time.

They pleaded to stay all week. She agreed; they could go to school from her office. From there, they watched as she swore her oath.

But as the day went on, and Trump insisted that Congress could reverse the election in some kind of final showdown on Wednesday, she watched a social media frenzy brew.

Mace had long supported Trump, campaigning for him since his first presidential race. But now she grew worried.



COMMENTARY

Mace: I support Trump, but Congress lacks authority to overturn Electoral College

BY NANCY MACE

She spent the previous weekend reading the Constitution, poring over the 12th Amendment and Title 3 of the U.S. Code. She wanted to understand exactly what they said about Congress' power in the coming vote to certify electors.

It wasn't confusing. Their role was ceremonial.

If we don't follow that, she thought, we aren't a nation at all.

She could not go along with the president and much of her party.

Mace had long ago learned some things about courage. Her father was a brigadier general, a war hero, the most decorated living graduate of The Citadel.

But nothing fueled her courage like a day when she was 16 years old. A friend and classmate sexually assaulted her. Afraid and ashamed, she'd blamed herself. She'd feared what other people would think.



PALMETTO POLITICS

It took SC Rep. Nancy Mace 25 years to share she was raped. She never expected this.

BY CAITLIN BYRD CBYRD@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

She dropped out of high school. Her fire faded.

But then, she rediscovered her courage, a new and stronger kind, one that didn't blame herself and wouldn't bend to fear of what other people thought. She returned to school, earned her diploma and, in 1999, became the first female to graduate from The Citadel's Corps of Cadets.

Reading the Constitution, she summoned that courage anew.

Mace announced publicly that she wouldn't join Trump's efforts. She spoke to outlets, including The Post and Courier, about her decision.

"I'm not going to be voting with any of those folks," Mace said. "I am not going to vote to overturn the results of the Electoral College because I do not believe that Congress knows better than voters or better than the states."

Mara Mellstrom, Mace's chief of staff, knew her boss spent hours studying election law and the Constitution before making a decision.

"Honesty and clarity are Nancy Mace's two greatest strengths," Mellstrom said. "It was a difficult vote, but she knew all along. She swore an oath to the Constitution."

Other members of South Carolina's federal delegation didn't agree.

Sen. Lindsey Graham told CBS that the effort would "probably do more harm than good." Sen. Tim Scott said nothing at first.

Her fellow GOP congressmen from South Carolina lined up behind Trump's effort.



NEWS

Wilson, Duncan among S.C. officials who challenged Biden win in wake of Capitol attack

BY COLIN DEMAREST CDEMAREST@AIKENSTANDARD.COM

As the president and others planning the strategy ramped up their rhetoric, so did his followers. She scrolled through social media, and Mace grew increasingly worried. The tenor was brooding, threatening.

Suddenly, she didn't want her children in the nation's capital any longer.

Her mother and sister planned to fly home the next day, Monday. Mace hurried to buy her children tickets on the first flight out.

She told them why, trying to thread her goodbye to them with more love than alarm. She didn't want them to be scared that their mom was in danger at work.

Even though she feared she was.

Threats become real

On Monday, she put her children on an airplane home to Charleston.

The next day, Tuesday, she ventured from her hotel to find something to eat. Bundled in a coat and hat, facemask on, she figured it was safe. Who would recognize her?

As she walked with a friend, someone approached her, an angry person who claimed to be a 1st District constituent who was irate that Mace wasn't backing Trump's effort to get Congress to overturn the election.

Mace tried to stay calm, to explain the Constitution didn't allow for that. If they tried to pull this stunt, it would only open the door for Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to do the same thing in four years. They might never have a Republican president again.



PALMETTO POLITICS

GOP Rep.-elect Mace won't block Biden electors: 'I do not believe that Congress knows better'

BY THOMAS NOVELLY TNOVELLY@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

But nothing she said mattered. The person continued to insist that Congress could do this, anger roiling into aggression, the person shaking with ire.

Fear pricked Mace's thoughts. As the screaming continued, she turned and walked away, then ducked into a store. She didn't stay long. She grabbed a few groceries for her staff — hummus, chips, soda — then hurried back to her hotel.

She didn't leave it again until 6 a.m. the next morning when she headed to the Capitol building for the big vote.



PALMETTO POLITICS

Clyburn pushes for 2nd Trump impeachment; Graham says it would 'do more harm than good'

BY JAMIE LOVEGROVE JLOVEGROVE@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

Day of infamy

Mace was in the chamber with Vice President Mike Pence presiding around 1 p.m. when, as promised, Republicans objected to the Arizona vote. The joint session recessed.

Along with other members, Mace headed back toward the Cannon House Office building nearby. She got about halfway when she learned the building had been evacuated. She wound up across the street, in the fifth floor of the Longworth House

Office Building, huddled in a corner office. Her staff met her there.

When they tried to leave, they realized the Cannon building wasn't cleared yet and got stuck in a tunnel with about 100 other people. They finally reached her new office around 4 p.m., as the place went into lockdown.

She and her staff locked the door, turned off the lights and stayed quiet.

Mace had never been through anything like it. Hours passed.

Her children texted her every hour, afraid. Mace spoke to her family, took press calls and compared notes with colleagues. Outside, sirens blared.

They stayed hunkered down for six hours, until around 10 p.m.

When they headed back to finish their voting after the rioters had been expelled and the Capitol secured, Mace was shocked that many of her colleagues were still planning to object in what she considered "a charade."



PALMETTO POLITICS

SC House Republican says it's not sedition to protest Biden vote

BY JAMIE LOVEGROVE JLOVEGROVE@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

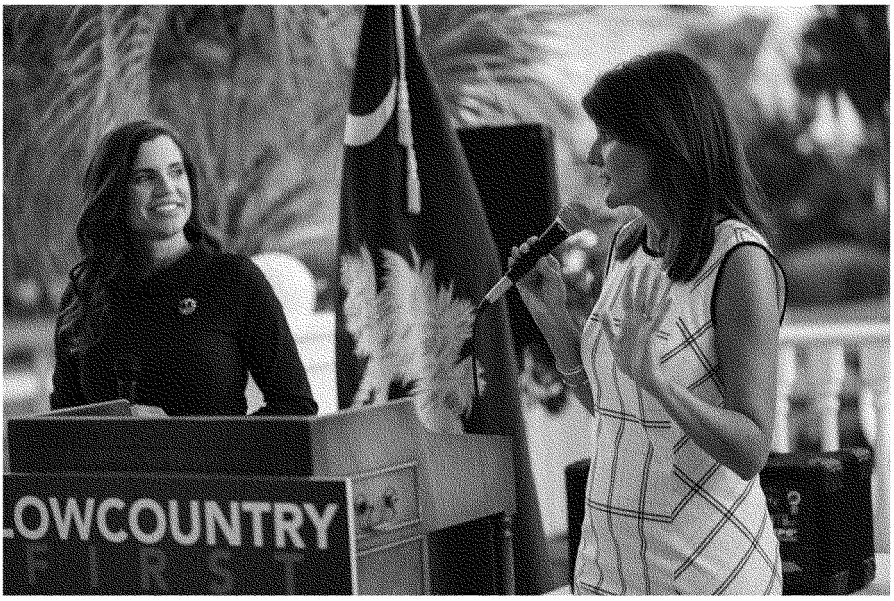
All five fellow Republican congressmen from South Carolina went along with Trump's effort to overturn the election. Only Mace and Rep. Jim Clyburn opposed it.

However, on the Senate side, Graham and Scott followed her lead.

It was a small consolation.

To Mace, so much was lost, and not just in life and injury and property.

"Every accomplishment that Republicans have made over the last four years, including President Trump had (made)," she said, "were wiped out in just a few short hours."



Nancy Mace received a boost when former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley endorsed her after the June primary and held a fundraiser for Mace at the Hilton Head Yacht Club. File/Mace Campaign/Provided

Lost cause

In the eyes of many, Mace's standing has only risen.

Gibbs Knotts, a political science professor and dean of the College of Charleston's School of Humanities, said Mace's statements decrying Trump make sense given her constituents.

South Carolina's 1st District is competitive, as seen by the narrow margin that propelled the state lawmaker to victory over Democratic incumbent Joe Cunningham in November.

NEWS

Nancy Mace prepares to take her seat in Congress; Joe Cunningham still wants to serve SC



BY THOMAS NOVELLY TNOVELLY@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

Mace launched her political career after running a media and public relations firm. She ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate, finishing in the back of a crowded pack challenging incumbent Sen. Lindsey Graham in the 2014 primary.

Undeterred, she went to work in 2016 as coalitions director and field director for Donald Trump's South Carolina presidential campaign. Then, in a 2018 special election, Mace won her Daniel Island Statehouse seat.

Now that she's in Washington, Mace knows she needs to appeal to Republicans and Democrats if she wants to stay there.

Knotts said it's clear party leaders recognize her as a rising star and that reelection could pave the path for higher office.

"She's young, she's a single mother and she brings in a fresh perspective which represents a new generation of leadership in Congress," Knotts said. "This seat launched Mark Sanford to the governorship and it launched Tim Scott to the Senate. The last few Republicans have made history with this seat."

The Post and Courier hosts Pints and Politics with Nancy Mace

But Charleston County GOP Chairman Maurice Washington said he hadn't heard many good reviews from local party members over her refusal to contest the Electoral College vote.

"Folks are very disappointed in the congresswoman's opposition, and that's just (because) South Carolina and the Republican Party are strong Trump supporters," he said. "But I have not heard anyone say they are going to primary her."

Similar sentiments echoed in Berkeley County, the most solidly Republican stronghold in the 1st District. County GOP Chair Victoria Cowart said she heard mixed reactions about Mace from party members, but disappointment seemed to be the dominant sentiment. She noted that five other Republicans in the South Carolina House delegation sided with Trump on the Electoral College dispute while Mace voted the same as Democratic U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn.

State Rep. Lin Bennett, R-West Ashley, a staunch and visible Trump supporter, said she was surprised by Mace's stance given that she ran as an avid backer of the president. Though discouraged, Bennett wants to see more of Mace in Congress before deciding whether a 2022 primary challenge is warranted.

"I'm upset, but I get upset with Tim (Scott) and Lindsey (Graham)," she said. "I get upset with all of them."

But some party leaders in the state see it differently. Matt Moore, who served as the state's GOP chairman from 2013 to 2017, said South Carolina's 1st District is diverse and wants someone who will stand out in Washington.

"It takes real courage to oppose your party's president," Moore said. "Nothing is more patriotic than standing up for your beliefs. I am confident Republicans will rally to Rep. Mace's side if anyone is dumb enough to challenge her to a primary."



Trump supporters try to break through a police barrier, Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. John Minchillo/AP

JOHN MINCHILLO

Doubling down

After waking up on her new office's leather couch Thursday, Mace tried not to imagine what would have happened if she hadn't put her children on that plane ride back to South Carolina on Monday. They would have been doing their schoolwork in her office when the mayhem began.

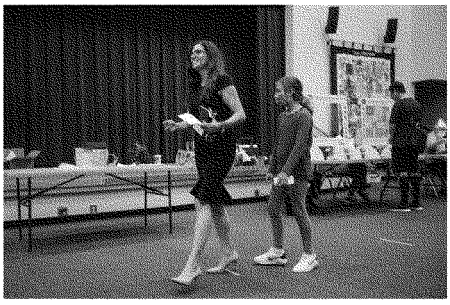
"I can't even imagine if my children were here how horrifying it would have been for them," she said. "I would have been devastated."

That only stoked her ire as she took to various news outlets and social media to express her outrage at the violence and rhetoric, emphasizing the real-world consequences.

"I am doubling down on my position and my stake in this."

She also wondered what would happen next.

Talk soon swirled about impeachment or invoking the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office. Ultimately, she decided she won't support either, contending that neither would help the nation heal and would only create a race against the clock before Trump is out of office.



Nancy Mace, then a Republican candidate in South Carolina's 1st Congressional District race, walks with her daughter, Elli, to a ballot station to vote at Daniel Island School on June 9, 2020, on Daniel Island. File/Gavin McIntyre/Staff

GAVIN MCINTYRE/STAFF

"The American people have had enough partisan games over the last several months, certainly over the last several weeks," she said.



NEWS

Nancy Mace, other GOP lawmakers ask Biden to stop Trump impeachment efforts

BY THOMAS NOVELLY TNOVELLY@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

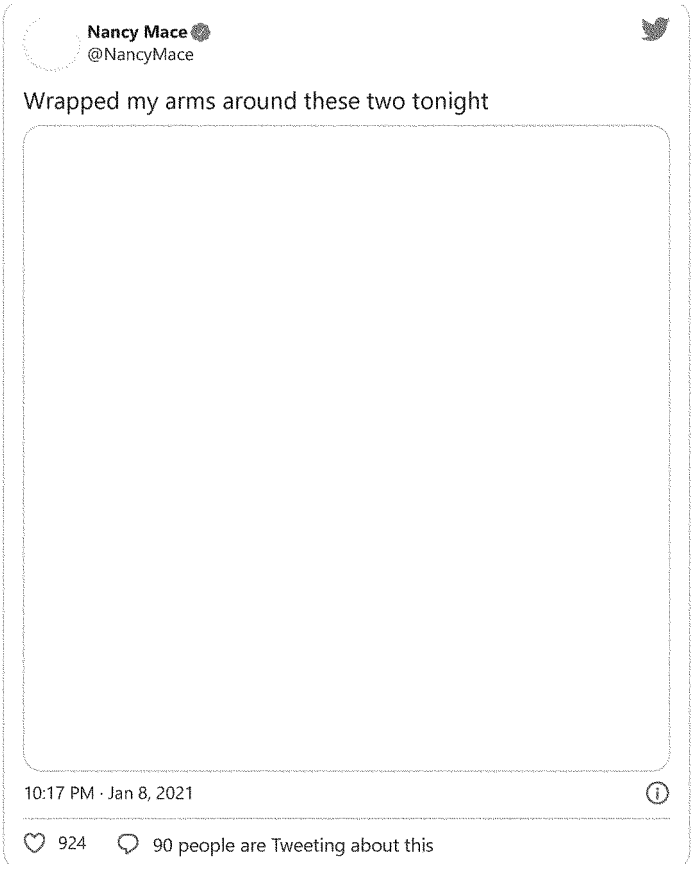
With the big vote over, she mostly wanted to get home to her children. They were with their father and would all talk about what happened, together, when she returned.

"I don't want them to be afraid that every time that mom goes to D.C., this is what happens. I don't really think that is what I signed up for," she said.

As the day wore on, she also didn't feel comfortable traveling just yet.

Just after lunch, one of them texted her again, "Y'all safe?"

She typed back, "Mommy is safe."



***Schuyler Kropf** contributed.*

Reach **Thomas Novelly** at 843-937-5713. Follow him @TomNovelly on Twitter.

MORE INFORMATION

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JENNIFER HAWES

Jennifer Berry Hawes is a member of the Watchdog and Public Service team who worked on the newspaper's Pulitzer-Prize winning investigation, "Till Death Do Us Part."

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Thomas Novelly is a political reporter based in Charleston. He also covers the military community and veterans throughout South Carolina. Previously, he wrote for the Courier Journal in Kentucky. He is a fan of Southern rock, bourbon and horse racing.

The New York Times https://nyti.ms/39l407X

Hundreds of Historians Join Call for Trump's Impeachment

More than 1,000 historians and writers, including Ron Chernow and Taylor Branch, have signed an open letter calling President Trump "a clear and present danger to American democracy."



By Jennifer Schuessler

Published Jan. 11, 2021 Updated Jan. 12, 2021

More than 1,000 historians and constitutional scholars have signed an open letter calling for the impeachment and removal of President Trump. They say his continuation in office after encouraging supporters to march on the U.S. Capitol posed "a clear and present danger to American democracy and the national security of the United States."

Those who signed the letter, released on Medium on Monday, include best-selling authors like Ron Chernow, Taylor Branch, Garry Wills and Stacy Schiff, as well as many leading academic historians. A number of the signatories had joined a previous letter in December 2019, calling for the president's impeachment because of "numerous and flagrant abuses of power" including failure to protect the integrity of the impending 2020 election.

"Since November 2020," the new letter says, "Trump has refused to accept the results of a free and fair election, something no president before him has ever done."

Politically, the condemnation by historians may carry less weight than the president's loss of support in recent days from business groups that once supported him or his policies. But David Greenberg, a historian at Rutgers who drafted the new letter, said that historical expertise mattered.

"Trump has defied the Constitution and broken laws, norms, practices and precedents, for which he must be held accountable now and after he leaves office," the letter says of his presidency. "No future president should be tempted by the example of his defiance going unpunished."

In September, the American Historical Association issued a statement condemning the first White House History Conference, held at the National Archives (and planned, the statement noted, without the involvement of any professional historical groups).

The New York Times https://nyti.ms/2LpW0dK

Leader of Proud Boys, a Far-Right Group, Is Arrested as D.C. Braces for Protests

About 340 National Guard troops are expected to deploy in support of local law enforcement before demonstrations against the election results.

By Jennifer Steinhauer, Katie Benner, Eric Schmitt and Helene Cooper

Published Jan. 4, 2021 Updated Jan. 6, 2021

WASHINGTON — The leader of the Proud Boys, a far-right group that has vocally supported President Trump's efforts to overturn the election results, was arrested on Monday in Washington as Mayor Muriel Bowser requested support from the Army National Guard before expected protests of the November vote in the nation's capital.

Enrique Tarrio, the chairman of the Proud Boys, was arrested by the Metropolitan Police on suspicion of burning a Black Lives Matter banner that was torn from a historic Black church in Washington during protests last month that led to several violent clashes, including stabbings, around the city.

A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police Department confirmed that Mr. Tarrio, 36, had been arrested on charges of destruction of property stemming from an episode in downtown Washington in mid-December. Upon his arrest, he was found to have two high-capacity firearm magazines and charged accordingly with possession.

The protests by the Proud Boys and other groups are expected to occur on Tuesday and Wednesday in support of Mr. Trump and his false claims that he was re-elected.

In anticipation, officials announced that about 340 Army National Guard troops — about 15 percent of the 2,700 District of Columbia National Guard force — are expected to deploy on Tuesday and remain for two days in support of local law enforcement. Their mission is to help control traffic and to protect the streets and public transit stops, officials said.

The number ordered to duty is far less than the 5,000 Guard troops who deployed to Washington in June, at the height of the protests over the police killing of George Floyd. During those protests, Mr. Trump walked across Lafayette Square for a photo op after the authorities used tear gas and rubber bullets against mostly peaceful protesters.

Unlike other National Guard units, the D.C. Guard reports not to a governor but to the Army secretary, who in turn reports to the defense secretary and the president.

Customs and Border Protection is also placing agents on standby in Washington to guard federal property during the anticipated protests, according to Stephanie Malin, a spokeswoman for the agency.

"The District of Columbia National Guard is in a support role to the Metropolitan Police Department, which will enable them to provide a safe environment for our fellow citizens to exercise their First Amendment right to demonstrate," Maj. Gen. William J. Walker, the commanding general of the D.C. National Guard, said in a prepared statement.

In June, Mr. Trump raised the option of deploying active-duty troops onto the streets and ran into resistance from both his defense secretary at the time, Mark T. Esper, and Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The president eventually backed down.

NICHOLAS KRISTOF: *A behind-the-scenes look at Nicholas Kristof's gritty journalism, as he travels around the world.* Sign Up

Some Pentagon officials acknowledged that they were worried about a possible repeat: that Mr. Trump could seek to use civil unrest, especially if it turned violent, to use active-duty troops to restore order, which could play into his battle in Congress and in the courts to overturn the election outcome.

The deep concerns among national security experts about the apolitical military being ordered into a partisan dispute was underscored on Sunday, when The Washington Post published an extraordinary opinion article by all 10 living former secretaries of defense. The former Pentagon chiefs, both Republicans and Democrats, warned that the military should not be dragged into any election disputes.

The letter signing was organized by former Vice President Dick Cheney, according to people close to the signatories. In a clear rebuke to Mr. Trump, who is expected to address a rally of supporters on Wednesday, the men wrote, "The time for questioning the results has passed; the time for the formal counting of the Electoral College votes, as prescribed in the Constitution and statute, has arrived."

The protests on Wednesday will present a particular challenge to the acting secretary of defense, Christopher C. Miller, a former counterterrorism official who replaced Mr. Esper at the end of last year. In recent weeks, Mr. Miller has demonstrated awkward political instincts; on Sunday, he announced a confusing reversal of strategy on confronting threats that Iran might attack American troops or diplomats in the Persian Gulf.

Since the protests in June, some of the country's senior military leaders have talked among themselves about what to do if Mr. Trump again tries to invoke the Insurrection Act to deploy active-duty troops into the streets, Pentagon officials confirmed. The Insurrection Act, a 200-year-old law, enables a president to send active-duty troops to quell disturbances over the objections of governors.

In the months since June, General Milley and the military's top leadership have sought to build firewalls to slow any immediate rationale to invoke the act.

In the protests last year, General Milley rushed to summon enough National Guard troops from other states to reinforce the 1,200 D.C. Guard troops who had already been called up. In the end, more than 5,000 National Guard troops from 12 states and the District of Columbia, many with experience in dealing with civil disturbances, arrived in time to prevent the president invoking the act.

Troops from the 82nd Airborne, based in Fort Bragg, N.C., still headed to Washington but were deployed to Fort Belvoir, in suburban Virginia, as a backup force and never entered the capital.

To avoid that kind of last-minute scramble in the future, the Pentagon streamlined the process for activating National Guard troops from other states in support of the D.C. Guard. A senior military official said on Monday that there were no indications that the 82nd Airborne was on any kind of alert status for possible duty in Washington.

Several Pentagon officials have said that Mr. Trump risked resignations among many of his senior generals if he ordered active-duty troops into the streets at the time of the election.

Pentagon officials have been keeping track of nightly episodes of civil unrest across the country, in order for Defense Department officials to be able to counter any narrative that might come from the White House that such occurrences could not be handled by local law enforcement.

The protests in Washington scheduled for Wednesday by Mr. Trump's supporters might attract counterprotests by opposing groups. Pentagon officials worry that any violent clashes could give the president an opportunity to try to order troops to the streets.

The letter from the former defense secretaries cited General Milley, who said in October that "there is no role for the U.S. military in determining the outcome of a U.S. election." The general has said this repeatedly in recent months to Congress and to Pentagon and White House officials, Defense Department officials said.

The former defense secretaries also addressed the continuing fight between Mr. Miller and President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. over complaints that the Biden transition team had not been given proper access at the Defense Department. Mr. Miller and his subordinates, the defense secretaries wrote, "must refrain from any political actions that undermine the results of the election or hinder the success of the new team." The Pentagon has released several statements listing the support given to the Biden transition team.

Zolan Kanno-Youngs contributed reporting.

Attorney for Sec of State: 'Kraken' lawsuit alleges 'utterly implausible fraud'

azmirror.com/2020/12/08/attorney-for-sec-of-state-kraken-lawsuit-alleges-utterly-implausible-fraud/

December 8, 2020



Photo by Jim Small | Arizona Mirror

An attorney for Secretary of State Katie Hobbs urged a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit seeking to overturn Arizona's election results that is filled with wild and unsubstantiated allegations of voter fraud — even foreign espionage — which he described as nothing less than an "attack on democracy."

Justin Nelson, of the Houston law firm Susman Godfrey LLP, said the lawsuit filed by attorney Sidney Powell, a former lawyer for President Donald Trump's campaign who was fired last month and is now operating independently, should be dismissed on a number of grounds. The claims belong in state court because it's being challenged under provisions of Arizona law, he said. And Nelson said it should be dismissed because the plaintiffs waited too long to take them to court.

But beyond that, Nelson repeatedly emphasized that the lawsuit is filled with nonsensical and baseless claims, largely from anonymous sources and "expert witnesses" with no real expertise. The allegations are devoid of facts, he said, and come from witnesses with no firsthand knowledge.

And those claims largely have nothing to do with the election in Arizona, he said. The plaintiffs — Trump's Arizona electors and several county GOP chairmen — presented bizarre allegations that Venezuela, Iran and China rigged the 2020 presidential election through ballot tabulation machines from Dominion Voting Systems, based on a statement from an anonymous witness. Other claims stem from statements attributed to an alleged former military intelligence analyst known as Spider. The plaintiffs also claim hundreds of thousands of illegally cast votes in Arizona based on unverified numbers and alleged "data analysis."

"They allege an utterly implausible fraud," Nelson said.

Nelson noted that federal courts in Georgia and Michigan this week rejected similar lawsuits filed by Powell.

"As other courts have recognized, plaintiffs' suit is an attack on democracy. Worse, they are using the federal court system in an attempt to undermine the rule of law and obtain breathtaking, startling and unprecedented relief to overturn the will of the people," Nelson told U.S. District Court Judge Diane Humetewa.

Julia Haller, an attorney with Powell's firm, tried to persuade Humetewa why the lawsuit should proceed, though the judge at one point had to remind her not to argue the merits of her case and instead explain why it shouldn't be dismissed.

"At this juncture I'm just trying to understand why this complaint should survive," Humetewa said.

Haller disputed the notion that she should have filed her lawsuit in state court instead of U.S. District Court, saying the federal courts have supplemental jurisdiction over such claims, which she brought under federal law. She denied that the plaintiffs took too long in bringing their claims to court, saying they were not yet aware on election night of the kinds of fraud being perpetrated. And she argued that the lawsuit is fundamentally different from a lawsuit by Arizona GOP Chairwoman Kelli Ward, one of the plaintiffs, that a Maricopa County judge recently rejected.

"We are saying Arizona needs to invalidate and take a good look at what happened here, rather than move forward with this certification," Haller said, referring to the election results that Hobbs and Gov. Doug Ducey, the two defendants named in the lawsuit, certified on Dec. 4.

Haller at times made blatantly incorrect statements about Arizona's election procedures, describing practices from other states that aren't used here.

For example, Haller said voting machines from Dominion, Maricopa County's provider that has become the subject of many baseless conspiracy theories, don't provide paper ballots showing the actual selections made by voters. She said they print out papers with QR codes instead. That is how Dominion machines in some states, such as Georgia, operate. But in Maricopa County, the only county in Arizona that uses Dominion machines, voters fill out paper ballots, and tabulation machines read the actual selections, with the ballots providing a physical record of the votes.

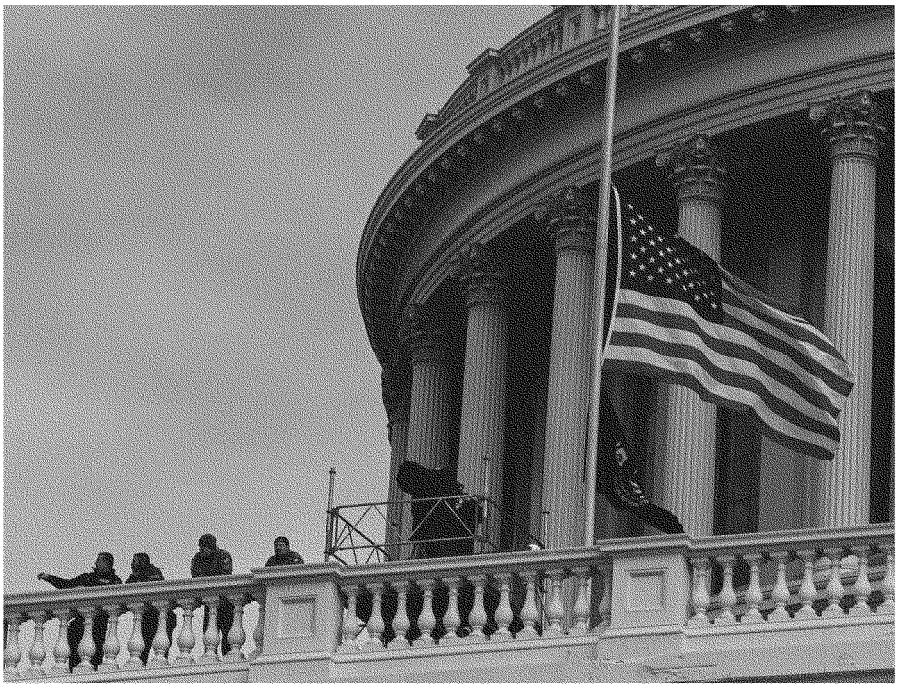
While describing election integrity as a bipartisan issue, Haller noted that the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives last year passed legislation making it clear that voting machines shouldn't be connected to the internet, and that states should use paper ballots. Arizona uses paper ballots, and its voting machines aren't connected to the internet.

Humetewa said she would rule on the motion to dismiss by Wednesday afternoon.

Va. man arrested at inauguration checkpoint says he was lost and didn't mean to bring gun, ammunition to D.C.

washingtonpost.com/local/beeler-arrest-inauguration-checkpoint/2021/01/16/8597db24-5834-11eb-a817-e5e7f8a406d6_story.html

By Jessica Contrera, Carol D. Leonnig and Katie Mettler January 16, 2021



A Virginia man was arrested after law enforcement found at least one firearm and ammunition in his truck as he tried to enter an inauguration security checkpoint near the Capitol on Friday evening with a credential that was not authorized, according to court documents.

Wesley Allen Beeler, 31, of Front Royal drove his Ford F-150 up to a checkpoint on E Street, northeast of the Capitol, where he was met by Capitol Police officers, according to the court documents. The area is one of many under complete lockdown following the Jan. 6 breach of the Capitol and ahead of the Jan. 20 inauguration.

Beeler was arrested on charges of carrying a pistol without a license, possession of an unregistered firearm and possession of unregistered ammunition, a Capitol Police spokesperson said. At a hearing on Saturday afternoon, the U.S. attorney's office for the District asked a judge to issue a stay-away order. Beeler was released on personal recognizance, which prosecutors did not object to, even when the judge asked three times whether the government wished him to be held ahead of trial.

"It was an honest mistake," Beeler explained after being released. In a tear-filled interview, he said he has spent the past week working as hired security in downtown Washington ahead of the inauguration. He said he forgot that his firearm was in his truck when he left his home in Virginia, where he said he has a license to carry. He said he realized it was there halfway through his trip but that he was running late, so he didn't turn around. He denied that he had the more than 500 rounds of ammunition listed in his arrest report.

"I pulled up to a checkpoint after getting lost in D.C. because I'm a country boy," he said. "I showed them the inauguration badge that was given to me."

A person with knowledge of Beeler's actions, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the case is pending, said Beeler has no extremist ties, cooperated fully with law enforcement and was cleared from further investigation, except for the charge of violating District law by carrying a pistol without a license.

Beeler said he was given a credential by his employer, MVP Protective Services. A man who answered a phone number connected with MVP said, "Unfortunately, at this time I am not authorized to speak," when reached by a reporter Saturday evening.

U.S. Capitol Police said in charging papers that Beeler was "not authorized to enter the restricted area" with the credential he presented.

In a statement Saturday, police said he presented "a non-government issued" credential.

As his credential was being checked, another officer noted bumper stickers on the truck that read, "Assault Life" and "If they come for your guns give 'em your bullets first," police said.

The officers asked Beeler whether he had weapons in the car, and he volunteered that he had a Glock in his center armrest, charging papers said.

After removing Beeler from the truck, officers found that the firearm, a 9mm handgun, was loaded with a high-capacity magazine and 17 rounds of ammunition and that the pistol was chambered and ready to fire, court document said.

Police said they also found more than 500 rounds of pistol ammunition, including hollow-point bullets. Nearly two dozen shotgun shells were "located in plain sight in the rear cargo area of the vehicle," the court documents said.

Beeler said he recalls having only the loaded firearm and the shotgun shells in his vehicle.

"It was just me forgetting to take it out of my truck before I left for work. I don't know what the D.C. laws are. It still comes back on me, but I'm not a criminal," he said.

Beeler said he volunteered for a job in D.C. after a friend let him know of an overnight job with MVP to guard media equipment located at Seventh Street and Constitution Avenue NW. He said the credential he was given had previously been enough to enter that area.

He said he has had numerous security assignments in the past, including working as a corrections officer and providing security for a Saudi Embassy property. A spokeswoman spokeswoman for Allied Universal Security Services confirmed that Beeler had previously worked for U.S. Security Associates, a smaller security company it acquired.

Prosecutors did not talk about the details of the case at the hearing, and a spokesperson for the office did not respond to a request for comment Saturday night.

Beeler's mother and father, who both spoke to The Washington Post before Beeler was released from custody, said he works in private security and had been reporting for work downtown through the past week.

Beeler's wife, Noelle Beeler, said she realizes why people reacted with fear and concern at the report of a man with a Glock and a cache of ammo in his truck in downtown Washington.

"It's understandable during these times. It does sound suspicious," she said. The couple was trying to find a way for Beeler to return home after his release and to explain to their children what happened.

"I don't want my kids to think I'm a bad person," Beeler said.

Beeler has been ordered not to return to the city except to appear in court or meet with his lawyer.

Julie Tate, Jennifer Jenkins, Peter Hermann, Alex Horton, and Dan Lamothe contributed to this report.

Trump blasts Ducey over election certification, says he betrayed Arizonans

azmirror.com/2020/11/30/trump-blasts-ducey-over-election-certification/

December 1, 2020



President Donald Trump and Gov. Doug Ducey at a White House meeting on June 13, 2019, where Ducey talked about the state's occupational licensing recognition law. Screenshot via YouTube

After years of loyal support for President Donald Trump, Gov. Doug Ducey became the latest target of the president's ire after certifying Arizona's 2020 general election results, including former Vice President Joe Biden's historic win in the traditional conservative stronghold of Arizona.

Trump on Monday afternoon retweeted a comment declaring that Ducey "has betrayed the people of Arizona," adding his own commentary, "TRUE!"

That comment came just after another tweet in which Trump chastised Ducey for "rushing" to sign the statewide election canvass. He retweeted a comment noting that the certification of Arizona's election results allow Democratic Senator-elect Mark Kelly, who defeated Republican U.S. Sen. Martha McSally, to be sworn in immediately.

> TRUE! https://t.co/GaldE1fto5
>
> — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) November 30, 2020

Kelly will be sworn in on Wednesday, narrowing the GOP's advantage in the Senate to 52-48. His swearing-in comes earlier than other Senate contest winners from the general election because his race was a special election to fill the final two years of the term John McCain was elected to in 2016.

"Why is he rushing to put a Democrat in office, especially when so many horrible things concerning voter fraud are being revealed at the hearing going on right now. @OANN What is going on with @dougducey? Republicans will long remember!" the president tweeted, referring to One America News Network, an avowedly pro-Trump cable network that he often praises.

State law mandates that the secretary of state, governor, attorney general and Arizona Supreme Court chief justice certify the canvass on the fourth Monday after the general election.

> Why is he rushing to put a Democrat in office, especially when so many horrible things concerning voter fraud are being revealed at the hearing going on right now. @OANN What is going on with @dougducey? Republicans will long remember! https://t.co/XILGaHcyw7
>
> — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) November 30, 2020

Trump's comment referenced a self-styled hearing hosted by a group of Republican state legislators in downtown Phoenix on Monday. The lawmakers, accompanied by Trump campaign attorneys Rudy Giuliani and Jenna Ellis, spent hours listening to testimony from people who questioned Arizona's election results.

Among the spurious claims aired at the hearing — the latest in a series of baseless and fact-free claims of fraud regarding election results in Arizona and elsewhere in the wake of Trump's defeat — were allegations that election workers in Maricopa didn't actually verify the signatures on the nearly 2 million early ballots that voters cast, and that the ballot tabulation machines used by election officials may have been programmed to give Biden 1.3 votes for every vote Trump received. Neither claim has a shred of evidence to back it up.

Trump called into Monday's hearing to reiterate his criticism of Ducey and repeat the baseless allegations that the election in Arizona was "rigged" against him.

"You have a governor named Ducey," Trump said, eliciting a chorus of boos from the crowd at the Hyatt Regency before launching into a tirade about the governor allegedly rushing to allow Kelly to be sworn in.

Trump said his campaign will likely file new lawsuits on Tuesday in Michigan and Pennsylvania, two other states he has baselessly alleged Biden won through fraud, though he didn't mention any new litigation in Arizona, despite the purported day of evidence regarding election malfeasance in the state.

And the president had a parting shot for Ducey before he hung up the phone, which Ellis held up to a microphone: "Arizona will not forget what Ducey just did."

Ducey responded Monday night with a series of comments on Twitter, defending the conduct of Arizona's elections and his actions in signing the election canvass.

The governor has often boasted that Arizona "makes it easy to vote and hard to cheat," and said on Monday that the state has "some of the strongest laws in the country" when it comes to elections. He touted Arizona's voter identification requirement at the polls and noted that election workers verify every signature on early ballots, with bipartisan observers present. He also pointed out that Arizona prohibits "ballot harvesting" — the practice of collecting other voters' early ballots for delivery to election officials — and doesn't count early ballots that arrive after election day.

"The problems that exist in other states simply don't apply here," Ducey said.

Ducey said state law required him to approve the election results by today. The law doesn't permit a delay in certifying the state election canvass unless counties decline to certify their own results, he said, which didn't happen.

"That's the law. I've sworn an oath to uphold it, and I take my responsibility seriously," Ducey said.

The governor also noted that the election canvass triggers a five-day window for anyone who wants to challenge the election results in court. Arizona Republican Party Chair Kelli Ward is challenging the results, alleging that Maricopa County could have theoretically verified signatures on early ballots in error and changed votes on "duplicated" ballots that couldn't be read by tabulation machines, though she has yet to present any evidence that such misconduct occurred.

> I've been pretty outspoken about Arizona's election system, and bragged about it quite a bit, including in the Oval Office. And for good reason. 1/
>
> — Doug Ducey (@dougducey) December 1, 2020

But Ducey didn't directly address Trump's attacks against him, nor did he refute the baseless election fraud claims being promoted by the president and other prominent Republicans, including legislators, members of Congress and others from Arizona. The governor has consistently refused to explicitly reject those claims or say that fraud didn't influence the election results in Arizona.

Trump's broadsides against the governor come despite Ducey's years of loyalty and his recent hesitance to acknowledge Arizona's election results. Ducey repeatedly refused to say Biden won the state, often noting that there was pending litigation over the election and that Trump

and the other plaintiffs had a right to be heard in court.

While discussing state and federal responses to the COVID-19 crisis during a July press conference, Ducey emphasized his close relationship with Trump and said he set the presidential anthem "Hail to the Chief" as his ringtone for any call from the White House. On Monday, as he signed the state election canvass, the song began playing from the cell phone in his suit pocket.

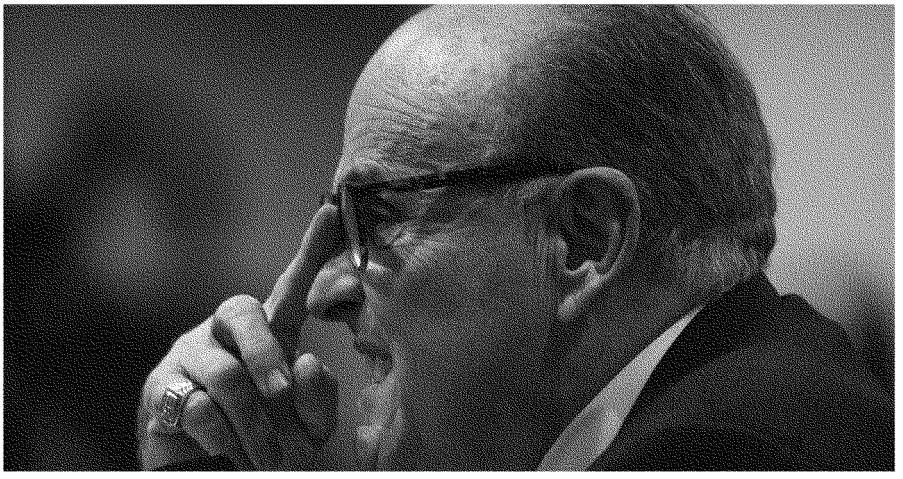
Ducey spokesman C.J. Karamargin said that call could have come from numerous members of the Trump administration and that he doesn't know who it was from. He said "Hail to the Chief" plays for any call from the White House switchboard.

Ducey wasn't the only prominent Republican whom Trump lashed out against on Monday regarding election results and unfounded fraud claims. He reiterated his criticism of Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, who has defended the integrity of the election in his state, which Biden won.

Rudy Giuliani's bizarre legal strategy, in two clips

vox.com/2020/12/3/22150194/trump-rudy-giuliani-michigan-results-election-fraud-voter-suppression-detroit-melissa-carone

Jerusalem Demsas December 3, 2020



Michigan Republicans asked Giuliani to prove his voter fraud claims. He brought a discredited witness who accused them of vote tampering instead.

President Donald Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani speaks during an appearance before the Michigan House Oversight Committee on December 2, 2020.
Rey Del Rio/Getty Images

"What'd you guys do — take it and do something crazy to it?"

That's just one of many absurd claims in a clip that has reached more than 13 million views already, where Melissa Carone — one of Rudy Giuliani's star witnesses at a hearing where he asked Michigan legislators to overturn the state's presidential election results — veers from accusation to accusation. In a testy exchange, Carone accuses Republican state representatives of tampering with state voting recordswhen one official tells her the poll book is not off by 30,000 votes.

The exchange is comically hard to follow, but it's illustrative of the sputtering, slapdash, and conspiracy theory-driven nature of Trumpworld'sflailingattempts to discredit and overturn the results of the 2020 election.

> This is like pretty much the trumpiest thing I've ever seen

> pic.twitter.com/2NgXi3vVvB
>
> — Molly Jong-Fast (@MollyJongFast) December 3, 2020

Carone's testimony was part of a hearing scheduled on December 1 when Michigan House Oversight Chair Matt Hall (R) invited Rudy Giuliani, President Donald Trump's personal lawyer, to "speak to the committee on election irregularities in Michigan." Hall said in his statement that he was hoping for "clarity and transparency."

That's not what Michigan got.

According to MLive, the Trump legal team mostly spent their time calling up Michigan Republicans to testify against the election process in Wayne County. Many of them rehashed baseless claims of voter fraud and misconduct "made at a Senate Oversight Committee hearing Tuesday and in affidavits included in various legal challenges to the election results ... none of those challenges have been successful in court."

This hearing came two days after Attorney General Bill Barr told the Associated Press that there was no proof that widespread voter fraud could have altered the result of the 2020 presidential election.

Michigan Republicans did not allow testimony under oath, restricted Democrats from calling witnesses, and prohibited cross-examination, leading Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel to call the hearings a "state sponsored disinformation campaign geared toward undermining our electoral system."

Carone's testimony was, if not emblematic, at least fairly in step with the rest of the hearing. Hertestimony went too far for even Giuliani, who at one point leaned over, seemingly to try to restrain his witness after she laughed derisively at a request to stop interrupting the official asking her to clarify her claims of fraud. It's unclear what Giuliani expected — Carone's accusations had been aired on Fox when she was interviewed on November 11. In the interview with Lou Dobbs, she insinuated that vans providing food to poll workers were in fact carrying illegitimate votes instead.

Days later, a Wayne County judge stated that these allegations "simply are not credible," according to reporting by the Washington Post.

First voter fraud claims, then voter suppression attempts — the Michigan hearings followed a well-trodden path

Multiple witnesses focused their criticisms on Detroit, a city that is 79 percent Black and that Giuliani referred to as "corrupt," saying "don't scratch your head about what happens in Detroit. They steal elections in Detroit."

MLive reported that Detroit activists have been alarmed by the Trump campaign's claims of voter fraud in their city. Activist Branden Snyder told MLive that it "reeks of racism ... that Black folks and in a majority-Black city can't count their own votes." Nessel echoed these claims, saying "the themes we see, that persist here, are this: Black people are corrupt, Black people are incompetent, and Black people can't be trusted."

At Wednesday's hearing, one Michigan woman used racist language to argue in favor of instituting a voter ID requirement.

> "I think Chinese all look alike. How can you tell? If some Chow shows up, you can be anybody and you can vote." -one of Rudy Giuliani's witnesses yesterday insisting there must have been voter fraud in Michigan
>
> Yes, it's an actual quote.pic.twitter.com/nsM0Hc2LE7
>
> — Edward-Isaac Dovere (@IsaacDovere) December 3, 2020

Accusations of voter fraud are inextricable from the long history of restricting the right of people of color to vote. A January brief published by the Brennan Center for Justice explains:

> Like their Jim Crow predecessors, strict voter ID laws are often defended by reference to a racially neutral need to defend the 'integrity' of elections...but study after study has shown that voter impersonation fraud is vanishingly rare. Many also claim that these laws impose little burden because everyone has the requisite ID — but the reality is that millions of Americans don't, and they are disproportionately people of color.

Of course, Michigan does have a voter ID requirement. You have to present a valid form of identification or sign an affidavit. In the November 2016 election, only around 18,000 people opted to sign an affidavit instead of providing identification, according to Bridge Michigan, a nonpartisan, nonprofit news source. President-elect Joe Biden received over 150,000 more votes than Trump in the state.

One Republican official's reaction to the hearing pretty much sums it up — state Rep. Aaron Miller castigated Giuliani, telling the Detroit News: "He made wild and broad partisan insults for several minutes that had nothing to do with the election, and it was frankly unacceptable, shameful, and pathetic and distracts from any evidence that we might hear. I'm utterly embarrassed."

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Washington Examiner

Barr says debate over legitimacy of 2020 election 'precipitated' storming of Capitol

by Jerry Dunleavy, Justice Department Reporter | | January 18, 2021 10:39 PM

Questioning of the legitimacy of the 2020 election between President Trump and President-elect Joe Biden "precipitated" the storming of the U.S. Capitol earlier this month, according to former Attorney General William Barr.

In his first interview since the deadly siege of Congress, Barr was asked by the United Kingdom's ITV News global security editor Rohit Kachroo whether he thought that "perhaps the debate about the integrity of the election was the final straw."

"I think that that was the thing that precipitated the riots on the Hill. Now, I think it's always important to remember that most people are exercising their First Amendment rights, but there's a substantial group, obviously, that went far beyond that and broke into the Capitol and tried to interfere with the proceedings, and that's unacceptable," Barr said. "I'm sad to see, but not surprised in a way to see, the kind of violence we saw on Capitol Hill. I consider it despicable, and I was not attorney general — I had already left office when that occurred — but I felt that they should move very quickly to disperse that crowd, regardless of which side of the political spectrum is involved, we just cannot tolerate violence interfering with the processes of government."

Trump spent weeks claiming the election had been stolen from him by Biden. The Democratic-led House voted last week to impeach Trump, with the article of impeachment accusing him of inciting an insurrection in connection to rioters breaching the U.S. Capitol as lawmakers counted electoral votes.

"I'll leave it to the people who are looking into the genesis of this to say whether incitement was involved. I don't know if I'd use the word 'inevitable,' but I think that when you start suppressing free speech, when people lose confidence in the media, and also when they lose faith in the integrity of elections, you're going to have some people resort to violence," Barr said in the interview.

Barr, who departed the Trump administration just before Christmas, issued a scathing statement about Trump's behavior the day after the Capitol siege. "Orchestrating a mob to pressure Congress is inexcusable," Barr said . "The President's conduct yesterday was a betrayal of his office and supporters."

Before the ITV News interview came out, *Axios* reported on Monday that Barr told Trump on Dec. 1 that the major election fraud allegations leveled by Trump allies were "just bulls---."

During the discussion in the private dining room right next to the Oval Office, Barr reportedly said that Trump's legal team — apparently referring to people such as Rudy Giuliani and Sidney Powell — was "clownish." The report said Barr told Trump that the Justice Department had looked into claims of widespread voter fraud and told the president that "these things aren't

your ear with just isn't true." Barr reportedly added: "I'm a pretty informed legal observer, and I can't f------ figure out what the theory is here. It's just scattershot."

Barr was a harsh critic of the Trump-Russia investigations, but he rejected calls to appoint special counsels to investigate either Hunter Biden or allegations of voter fraud.

"To date, we have not seen fraud on a scale that could have affected a different outcome in the election," Barr told the *Associated Press* the same day he met with Trump. He also shot down allegations that millions of votes were flipped from Trump to Biden by voting machines nationwide. "The DHS and DOJ have looked into that, and so far, we haven't seen anything to substantiate that."

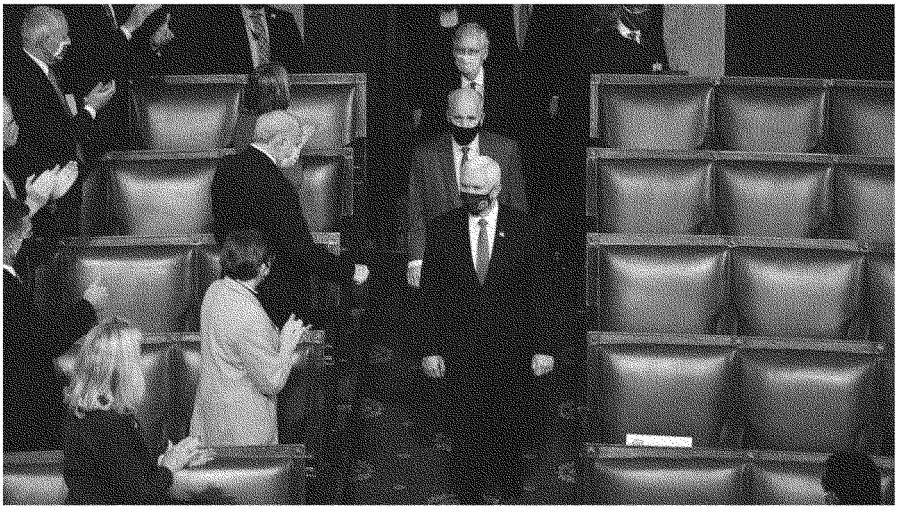
During his final Justice Department press conference a few days before Christmas, Barr repeated his assertion that he had not seen evidence of enough fraud to change the outcome.

"Let me just say that there is fraud, unfortunately, in most elections, and we are too tolerant of it, but I was commenting on the extent to which we have looked at suggestions or allegations of systemic or broad-based fraud that would affect the outcome of the election, and I've already spoken to that, and I stand by that statement," Barr said, adding, "if I thought a special counsel at this stage was the right tool and was appropriate, I would name one, but I haven't, and I'm not going to."

In the interview published on Monday, Barr recounted: "I said in my confirmation hearings that one of the things I was concerned about was the emergence of violence in the political process — it was just starting, you know, people attacking people wearing Trump hats, things like that." Barr added: "You had the Proud Boys, who were on the Right, fighting the antifa, who was on the Left, and I said that I was very worried about the emergence of violence and we had to have zero tolerance for it."

Hurt feelings, anger linger after Pence, Trump clash

abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/hurt-feelings-anger-linger-pence-trump-clash-75127167



The straight-laced evangelical and the brash reality TV star were never a natural fit

3:48

NOTIFIED: Jan. 21, 2021

Catch up on the developing stories making headlines.

The Associated Press
WASHINGTON -- They were never a natural fit, the straight-laced evangelical and the brash reality TV star. But for more than four years, President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence made their marriage of political convenience work.

Now, in the last days of their administration, each is feeling betrayed by the other. It's part of the fallout from an extraordinary 24-hour stretch in which Pence openly defied Trump, Trump unleashed his fury on the vice president, and a mob of violent supporters incensed by Trump's rhetoric stormed the Capitol building and tried to halt the peaceful transfer of power.

The Trump-Pence relationship is "pretty raw right now," said one top GOP congressional aide, who described multiple phone calls in which Trump berated Pence and tried to pressure the vice president to use powers he does not possess to try to overturn the results of the 2020 election. Pence, for his part, was left feeling "hurt" and "upset" by the episode, according to people close to him. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal matters.

Pence's decision to publicly defy Trump was a first for the notoriously deferential vice president, who has been unflinchingly loyal to Trump since joining the GOP ticket in 2016. Pence has spent his tenure defending the president's actions, trying to soothe anxious world leaders put off by Trump's caustic rhetoric, and carefully avoiding the president's ire.

He has taken on some of the administration's most high-pressure projects, including leading its response to the coronavirus. And he has stood by Trump even as the president leveled baseless allegations of voter fraud and refused to concede the election after his loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

Under normal circumstances, the vote-tallying procedure that began on Wednesday would have been a mere formality. But after losing court case after court case, and with no further options at hand, Trump and his allies zeroed in on the congressional tally as their last chance to try to challenge the race's outcome.

In a bizarre interpretation of the law, they argued that the vice president had the unilateral power to reject Electoral College votes supporting Biden. The Constitution makes clear that only Congress has that power.

The effort effectively turned Pence into a scapegoat who could be blamed for Trump's loss if the vice president refused to go along with the plan. Trump and his lawyers spent days engaged in an aggressive pressure campaign to force Pence to bend to their will in a series of phone calls and in-person meetings, including one that stretched for hours on Tuesday.

When Pence, who consulted with his own legal team, constitutional scholars and the Senate parliamentarian, informed Trump on Wednesday morning that he would not be going along with the effort, the president "blew a gasket," in the words of one person briefed on the conversation.

Not long after, Trump took the stage in front of thousands of his supporters at a "Stop the Steal" rally, where he urged them to march to the Capitol and continued to fan false hopes that Pence could change the outcome.

"If Mike Pence does the right thing we win the election," Trump wrongly insisted. He repeatedly returned to Pence throughout his speech as he tried to pressure the vice president to fall in line.

But Trump already knew what Pence intended. And as Trump spoke, Pence released a letter to Congress laying out his conclusion that a vice president cannot claim "unilateral authority" to reject states' electoral votes. He soon gaveled into order the joint session of Congress where his and Trump's defeat would be cemented.

Not long after that, members of Trump's rally crowd arrived at the Capitol, where they overwhelmed police, smashed windows, occupied the building and halted the electoral proceedings. Pence was whisked from the Senate chamber to a secure location, where he was held for hours with staff as well as his wife and daughter, who had been there to support him.

Trump did not call to check in on his vice president's safety during the ordeal and instead spent much of Wednesday consumed with anger over Pence's action, tweeting, "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution."

Later, members of the mob outside the Capitol were captured on video chanting, "Hang Mike Pence!"

For allies of Pence, it was a deeply upsetting episode that put the vice president in danger after four years of unstinting loyalty to the president and left Pence himself feeling hurt.

"I just think he's had enough," said John Thompson, who served as Pence's campaign spokesman and and also worked for the Republican Governors' Association.

"Yesterday just really pulled on his heartstrings," Thompson said. "He's been this loyal individual and the president was asking him to break the law and act outside his constitutional duties. I think it just reached a boiling point and the vice president said, 'I've had enough.'"

Republican Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma told Tulsa World, "I've never seen Pence as angry as he was today."

"He said, 'After all the things I've done for (Trump),'" Inhofe added.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, an informal Trump adviser, also came to Pence's defense, tweeting that his action was "a profile in courage."

It remains unclear how the dynamic between Trump and Pence will play out over the next two weeks and how long the president will hold his grudge. The White House declined to discuss Trump's thinking, but allies said Pence intends to spend the next two weeks focused on the transition.

He is also expected to attend Biden's inauguration.

And while Pence had been banking on his close relationship with the president to propel him to top-tier status if he decides to run for president in 2024, allies said they didn't think the vice president's actions this week would have long-term consequences, even if some voters blame him for Trump's defeat.

"I thought that was a very courageous moment for him," Thompson said. "And I think that's going to help his future."

——— Associated Press writers Alan Fram and Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

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Pence defies Trump, affirms Biden's win

By JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER January 7, 2021



WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence defied President Donald Trump early Thursday morning as he affirmed President-elect Joe Biden's November victory, putting an end to Trump's futile efforts to subvert American democracy and overturn the results of the election.

In a move that infuriated Trump and left his own political future far less certain, Pence on Wednesday acknowledged that he did not have the power to unilaterally throw out electoral college votes as

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Pence defies Trump, affirms Biden's win

Pence, as the session came to an end, said the count "shall be deemed a sufficient declaration" of Biden's victory, but offered no words of congratulations to the incoming administration. It capped an extraordinary day of chaos, violence and division after a pro-Trump mob stormed the Capitol, sending lawmakers into hiding and delaying the proceeding.



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Under normal circumstances, the vote-tallying procedure would be a mere formality — the final step in the complicated technical process of electing a new administration. But after losing court case after court case and with no further options at hand, Trump and his allies had zeroed in on January 6 as their last ditch chance to try to influence the outcome.

They spent days in a futile bid trying to convince Pence that the vice president had the power to reject electors from battleground states that voted for Biden, even though the Constitution makes clear the vice president's role in the joint session is largely ceremonial, much like a master of ceremonies.

Pence acknowledged that reality in a lengthy statement Wednesday laying out his conclusion that a vice president cannot claim "unilateral authority" to reject states' electoral votes.

"It is my considered judgment that my oath to support and defend the Constitution constrains me from

Pence defies Trump, affirms Biden's win

be counted and which should not," Pence wrote in a letter to members of Congress that was released shortly before he gaveled in the joint session of Congress. Not long after, the angry mob swarmed the Capitol, overwhelmed police and halted the proceeding that had been underway.

Pence's move was an expected outcome, but one that carved a dramatic fissure between Trump and Pence, his once most loyal lieutenant. In a dramatic split screen, Pence released the statement just after he arrived at the Capitol to tally the votes and as the president was telling thousands of supporters gathered near the White House that Pence could overturn them if he wanted.

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"If Mike Pence does the right thing we win the election," Trump wrongly told supporters, who later marched through Washington and stormed the Capitol. He repeatedly returned to Pence throughout his speech, voicing frustration as he tried to pressure the vice president to fall in line.

"Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us. And if he doesn't, its a sad day for our country," he said.

Trump, who has spent the last two months refusing to acknowledge his defeat, later tweeted his disapproval.

"Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to

Pence defies Trump, affirms Biden's win

they were asked to previously certify," he wrote. "USA demands the truth!"

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Pence, too, was fuming.

"I've known Mike Pence forever," Republican Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma told Tulsa World. "I've never seen Pence as angry as he was today."

"He said, 'After all the things I've done for (Trump),'" Inhofe added.

Despite claims by Trump and his allies, there was not widespread fraud in the election. This has been confirmed by a range of election officials and by William Barr, who stepped down as Trump's attorney general last month. Neither Trump nor any of the lawmakers who objected to the count have presented credible evidence that would change the outcome.

While Pence's allies had made clear that he intended to defy Trump and hew to the Constitution, the vice president's move was nonetheless a significant departure for a man who has spent the last four years defending the president at every turn and carefully avoiding his ire.

Pence is eying his own run for president is 2024, and the episode could damage his prospects, especially if Trump — or supporters who were wrongly convinced Pence had the power to change the outcome — maintain a grudge. Even out of office, Trump is expected to remain the de facto leader of the Republican Party and a political kingmaker for years to come.

Trump spent much of Wednesday consumed with anger over Pence's action, even as violent protesters

Pence defies Trump, affirms Biden's win

proceedings to a halt, according to a White House official who spoke only on condition of anonymity to discuss internal matters.

Pence was ushered out of the Senate chamber to a secure location as protesters breached the building. Pence never left the Capitol, according to his chief spokesman, and was in "regular contact" with House and Senate leadership, Capitol Police, and the departments of defense and justice throughout the ordeal.

Full Coverage: Electoral college

"The violence and destruction taking place at the US Capitol Must Stop and it Must Stop Now," Pence later tweeted. "Anyone involved must respect Law Enforcement officers and immediately leave the building."

After the House and Senate reconvened hours later, Pence re-opened the proceedings and returned to the task of opening the certificates of electoral votes from each state and presenting them to the appointed "tellers" from the House and Senate in alphabetical order.

After hours of roll calls and debate, he announced the contests' winners — Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris — formalizing his and Trump's defeat.



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Pence defies Trump, affirms Biden's win

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Pence defies Trump, affirms Biden's win

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The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

As U.S. Capitol attack unfolded, some Hill staffers remembered their school-shooting drills

By **Joe Heim** and **Valerie Strauss**

Jan. 14, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. EST

As the word spread via email alerts and social media that a violent mob had breached the U.S. Capitol last week, workers in offices throughout the complex locked and barricaded their doors, turned out the lights, stayed low to the ground, silenced their phones and sat quietly in the dark hoping the danger would not come to them.

For many of the Hill's younger staff members, the decision to take those actions wasn't instinct — it was training. An entire generation of Americans who grew up during an epoch of horrific school shootings have learned since kindergarten what to do when an outside threat enters the building.

In a small conference room in the offices of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), eight of her staff members hunkered down undetected for 2½ hours as the invaders occupied and trashed the offices of the third-most-powerful person in the country.

"You could hear the mob going through her office, breaking down the door, yelling, 'Where are you, Nancy?' " said Henry Connelly, Pelosi's head of communications. "There was a lot of screaming."

As the rioters took pictures and defaced the speaker's offices, Pelosi's staffers remained quiet inside the locked and barricaded conference room and tried to stay calm. One of them, a 23-year-old from Northern Virginia, thought back to training she had received growing up.

"In the Fairfax County Public School system, we had a lockdown drill every year where we were taught to turn off the lights, block all the windows, not open the door for any reason and to stay away from the windows. Last time I did that drill was senior year in high school, so it wasn't too long ago," the staffer, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said in a statement. "Also, as a Virginia Tech student, we were all trained during orientation for an active shooter/lockdown situation. Once we were settled in the dark, what was running through my mind was to be ready to run and fight. Thank goodness that didn't have to happen."

Previous training for live shooters in a school kicked into gear when the attempted insurrection started, said Sarah Iddrissu, chief of staff for new Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-N.Y.). Bowman is the founder of Cornerstone Academy for Social Action, a public middle school in Eastchester, Bronx, and served as principal for a decade before winning his House seat in November. Iddrissu was part of the founding team of the school and taught literacy there before joining Bowman on Capitol Hill.

"We've done many drills before as educators and immediately knew what to do," Iddrissu said. "In that moment, the congressman went into full principal mode and started to survey the situation and make sure everyone was okay."

They used what she called "educator language": "shelter in place" and "active shooter drill."

Tabitha Raskin, 23, a Philadelphia teacher, was at the Capitol that day to support her father, Rep. Jamie B. Raskin (D-Md.), a former constitutional law professor who has been named an impeachment manager for the Senate trial of President Trump. The Raskin family had just suffered a tragedy on New Year's Eve — the loss of Raskin's son, Tommy, 25, to suicide.

Tabitha Raskin said she and her brother-in-law were in a Capitol office with a window facing the Mall with a view of the Washington Monument. They saw a crowd starting to move toward the Capitol, she said, and soon she could see some of them climbing on the scaffolding.

"We were at the point of thinking, 'How did they get so close?' " she said. They then went to the House floor to see her father, and not long after a security detail escorted her to a Capitol office where she was locked in with her brother-in-law and her father's chief of staff, Julie Tagen.

"That's really when my mind went to the drills we had in school: Hide under a desk. Hide in corners. Turn lights off and turn off any noise. Don't speak," she said.

"We had a camera streaming from the House floor running, but we turned off everything. I hid under the desk with my brother-in-law," she said, with Tagen hiding near them. "We didn't make a sound."

She was "freaked out," she said, especially when rioters tried to open the door of the office but left when they realized it was locked. Tagen had picked up a fire pick in the event that they did get through the door, she said.

"In my mind I was wondering, 'How are these people still out there? What is going on?' Your mind goes to the worst place, and you think, 'Where is law enforcement?' Law enforcement is gone. You are fending for yourself," she said.

"Finally, after about half an hour, we heard, 'Police. Open up.' We were nervous it wouldn't be the police. We thought they should have a key and open it up. But it was the police, and they took us to the place where the members were sheltering."

The violent attack on the Capitol and the fear it engendered surfaced memories of the 2018 shooting of 14 students and three staff members at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., for Rep. Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), whose district includes the high school.

In a television interview with a Florida news channel that he posted on his Twitter account, Deutch said he had been contacted by constituents who were reminded of the trauma they felt following the shooting.

"As someone who has been through the crisis of trauma associated with a mass shooting, I hope we learn from this, not just what happened that led to this breach on our democracy, but I hope it reminds us that we need to do more to address the mental health aspects of things like this when they happen and to redouble our efforts to prevent the kinds of things like that horrible shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas in February of 2018. This sort of trauma is real."

Some staffers have taken to social media in recent days to express the fear they felt during the takeover and its lingering effects.

On Monday, Natalie Johnson, communications director for Rep. Nancy Mace (R-S.C.) tweeted, "The more time that passes since Wednesday's siege, the worse my anxiety gets. It's hard to describe the sheer fear of being locked in an office hearing nothing but incessant sirens, not knowing where the rioters were headed next & if that was to us."

While there are shelter-in-place drills and training that take place periodically for Hill staffers, another reason they know how to respond is their experience hearing from constituents who are victims of mass shootings and other attacks, said Nicole Tisdale, who was an intern and staffer on the Hill and served on the House Homeland Security Committee from 2009 to 2019.

"Unfortunately, as a staffer, you hear firsthand the stories of what worked to prevent more casualties and what constituents wished they had done in those moments of an attack," Tisdale said. "Talking with those victims and the survivors as they become policy advocates in the aftermath of an attack created a strange muscle memory for congressional staffers."

Tisdale said that staffers absorb response tactics by listening to testimony and reading incident reports and letters from constituents about attacks and shootings.

"It acts as a sort of training they didn't even know they had and hoped to never need," she said.

A 28-year-old House aide from New York said that as a voice came over the loudspeaker telling staffers to shelter in place, his first thought was, " 'How am I going to protect myself and everyone else in here and my member?' And also to keep calm."

The aide, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly, said he was immediately taken back to the school-shooter drills he took part in during high school. But there was a difference.

"As you get older, you realize how real these things are. It's one thing to watch a mass shooting on television. It's heartbreaking, but it doesn't hit you until you're in a situation similar to it when your life is literally in danger," the aide said. "It really wasn't until after when you start watching videos and looking at all the articles and you think, 'Wow, I was there. I was actually a target.' "

Updated January 17, 2021

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Trump's second impeachment

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The New York Times | https://nyti.ms/3spgwfu

F.B.I. Urges Police Chiefs Across U.S. to Be on High Alert for Threats

A joint intelligence bulletin warned that the deadly breach at the Capitol would be a "significant driver of violence" ahead of the inauguration of President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.

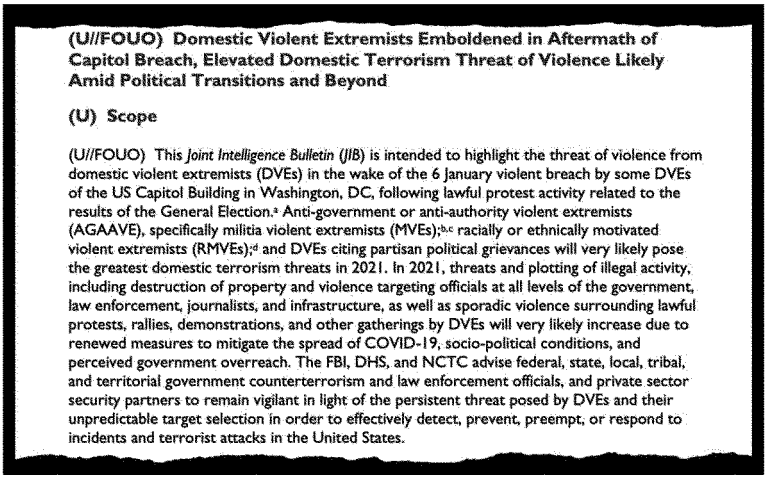
By John Eligon, Frances Robles, Zolan Kanno-Youngs and Helene Cooper

Published Jan. 13, 2021 Updated Jan. 15, 2021

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The F.B.I. on Wednesday urged police chiefs across the country to be on high alert for extremist activity and to share intelligence on any threats they encounter, as the U.S. government issued a dire intelligence bulletin warning of potential violence ahead of the inauguration.

In the call with police chiefs, Christopher Wray, the F.B.I. director, and Kenneth Cuccinelli, the acting deputy secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, warned about potential attacks on state capitols, federal buildings, the homes of congressional members and businesses, according to one of the chiefs on the call. The officials failed to identify any specific threats, participants said, but called on law enforcement officers across the country to watch for signs of trouble, no matter how small.

"They don't want to be dismissive of anything," Chief Jorge Colina of the Miami Police Department, one of thousands of officials participating in the call, said in an interview. "So even if it sounds aspirational, even if it's just like, 'Yeah, it'd be great if the whole place is burned down,' they don't want us to think, 'Ah, that's just some knucklehead, pinhead,' and be dismissive."



(U//FOUO) Domestic Violent Extremists Emboldened in Aftermath of Capitol Breach, Elevated Domestic Terrorism Threat of Violence Likely Amid Political Transitions and Beyond

(U) Scope

(U//FOUO) This *Joint Intelligence Bulletin (JIB)* is intended to highlight the threat of violence from domestic violent extremists (DVEs) in the wake of the 6 January violent breach by some DVEs of the US Capitol Building in Washington, DC, following lawful protest activity related to the results of the General Election.[a] Anti-government or anti-authority violent extremists (AGAAVE), specifically militia violent extremists (MVEs);[b,c] racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs);[d] and DVEs citing partisan political grievances will very likely pose the greatest domestic terrorism threats in 2021. In 2021, threats and plotting of illegal activity, including destruction of property and violence targeting officials at all levels of the government, law enforcement, journalists, and infrastructure, as well as sporadic violence surrounding lawful protests, rallies, demonstrations, and other gatherings by DVEs will very likely increase due to renewed measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, socio-political conditions, and perceived government overreach. The FBI, DHS, and NCTC advise federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government counterterrorism and law enforcement officials, and private sector security partners to remain vigilant in light of the persistent threat posed by DVEs and their unpredictable target selection in order to effectively detect, prevent, preempt, or respond to incidents and terrorist attacks in the United States.

The bulletin warned law enforcement officials across the country to remain vigilant. Obtained by The New York Times

The federal authorities also issued a joint intelligence bulletin warning that the deadly breach at the Capitol last week would be a "significant driver of violence" for armed militia groups and racist extremists who are targeting the presidential inauguration next week.

Extremists aiming to trigger a race war "may exploit the aftermath of the Capitol breach by conducting attacks to destabilize and force a climactic conflict in the United States," officials wrote in the bulletin issued by the National Counterterrorism Center and the Justice and Homeland Security Departments, which was disseminated widely to law enforcement agencies around the country.

In Washington, the state of readiness remained high, with Chief Robert J. Contee III of the Metropolitan Police Department saying on Wednesday that he expected more than 20,000 members of the National Guard in the Washington region on Inauguration Day. It remains unclear how many of the Guard members will carry weapons.

On Tuesday night, Defense Department officials said that the Army secretary, Ryan McCarthy, had decided to arm National Guard members who will be deployed to protect the Capitol building complex as Mr. Biden is sworn into office.

The number of National Guard troops in Washington may ultimately stretch beyond 20,000; the figure has been rapidly climbing in recent days as intelligence officials monitoring pro-Trump groups online have grown increasingly worried that militant, far-right organizations

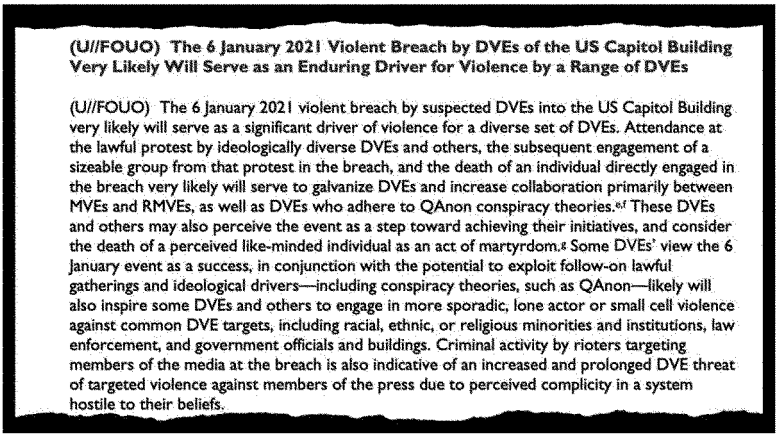
have plans for violent protests in Washington.

The decision to arm the Guard members illuminates the gnawing uncertainty of the past week. Members of Congress expressed concern about their return to the Capitol after they were briefed on several active threats against them, and the F.B.I. has warned of possible violence at all 50 state capitol buildings.

NICHOLAS KRISTOF: *A behind-the-scenes look at Nicholas Kristof's gritty journalism, as he travels around the world.*

Sign Up

Defense Department officials met with Washington authorities on Wednesday to work on plans to try to ensure there is not a repeat of last week's violent breach. The scope of the protests and the violence of the mob took law enforcement by surprise.



(U//FOUO) The 6 January 2021 Violent Breach by DVEs of the US Capitol Building Very Likely Will Serve as an Enduring Driver for Violence by a Range of DVEs

(U//FOUO) The 6 January 2021 violent breach by suspected DVEs into the US Capitol Building very likely will serve as a significant driver of violence for a diverse set of DVEs. Attendance at the lawful protest by ideologically diverse DVEs and others, the subsequent engagement of a sizeable group from that protest in the breach, and the death of an individual directly engaged in the breach very likely will serve to galvanize DVEs and increase collaboration primarily between MVEs and RMVEs, as well as DVEs who adhere to QAnon conspiracy theories.[6,f] These DVEs and others may also perceive the event as a step toward achieving their initiatives, and consider the death of a perceived like-minded individual as an act of martyrdom.[g] Some DVEs' view the 6 January event as a success, in conjunction with the potential to exploit follow-on lawful gatherings and ideological drivers—including conspiracy theories, such as QAnon—likely will also inspire some DVEs and others to engage in more sporadic, lone actor or small cell violence against common DVE targets, including racial, ethnic, or religious minorities and institutions, law enforcement, and government officials and buildings. Criminal activity by rioters targeting members of the media at the breach is also indicative of an increased and prolonged DVE threat of targeted violence against members of the press due to perceived complicity in a system hostile to their beliefs.

The bulletin specifically warned about extremists who adhere to QAnon conspiracy theories. Obtained by The New York Times

A Pentagon official expressed worry about a repeat of the pipe bombs that were placed in Washington last week. The official said the law enforcement agencies are also concerned that some protesters have threatened to show up at the homes of lawmakers, or to target their families.

The Inauguration of Joseph R. Biden Jr. ›

Latest Updates ›

Updated 5 minutes ago

- Some Republicans have turned to conspiracy theories and misinformation to explain the Capitol attack.
- Kamala Harris will resign from her Senate seat on Monday.
- For the most part, far-right groups stayed away from protests on Sunday as statehouses turned into citadels.

Is this helpful?

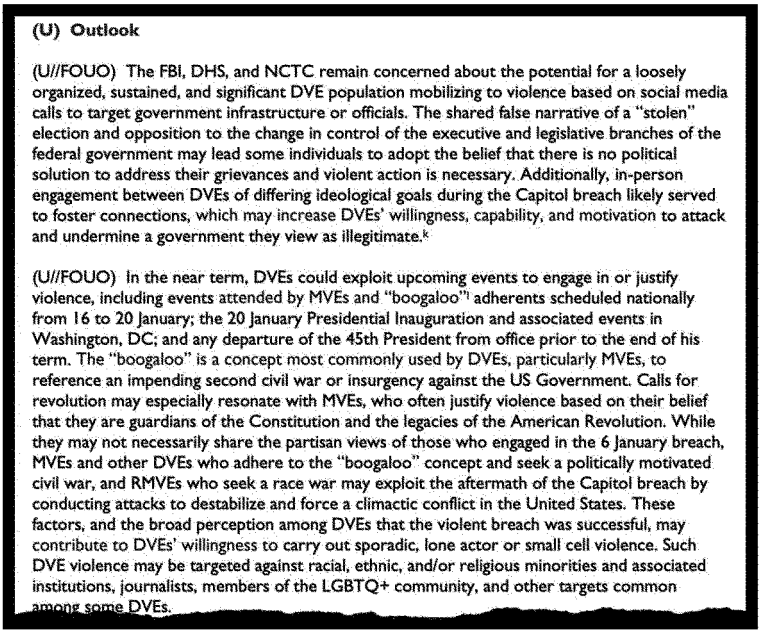
On the call with police chiefs, federal officials said they were closely monitoring extremist communications online and urged the chiefs to be mindful of potential lone-wolf actors and local armed groups, said Chief Chris Magnus of Tucson, adding that he had rarely heard federal officials this alarmed.

"They're very, very worried about these, what they referred to as domestic violent extremists, embedding themselves in other protests," he said. "Christopher Wray seemed particularly concerned about what was sort of the disregard these folks have for democratic government."

There was also some discussion about balancing the rights of protesters against the threat of violence.

"I think the message is they want everyone to have their First Amendment rights and be able to assemble without any government intrusion," said Chief Rick Smith of Kansas City, Mo., who was on the call. "At the same time, how do you prevent violence?"

In the bulletin, written by the National Counterterrorism Center and the Justice and Homeland Security Departments and obtained by The New York Times, federal officials said that extremist groups have viewed the breach of the Capitol as a success and have been galvanized by the death of Ashli Babbit, a military veteran and QAnon follower who was shot by the police as she tried to enter the heavily protected Speaker's Lobby, just outside the House chamber. The extremists could perceive that death as "an act of martyrdom," they said.



(U) Outlook

(U//FOUO) The FBI, DHS, and NCTC remain concerned about the potential for a loosely organized, sustained, and significant DVE population mobilizing to violence based on social media calls to target government infrastructure or officials. The shared false narrative of a "stolen" election and opposition to the change in control of the executive and legislative branches of the federal government may lead some individuals to adopt the belief that there is no political solution to address their grievances and violent action is necessary. Additionally, in-person engagement between DVEs of differing ideological goals during the Capitol breach likely served to foster connections, which may increase DVEs' willingness, capability, and motivation to attack and undermine a government they view as illegitimate.[k]

(U//FOUO) In the near term, DVEs could exploit upcoming events to engage in or justify violence, including events attended by MVEs and "boogaloo"[l] adherents scheduled nationally from 16 to 20 January; the 20 January Presidential Inauguration and associated events in Washington, DC; and any departure of the 45th President from office prior to the end of his term. The "boogaloo" is a concept most commonly used by DVEs, particularly MVEs, to reference an impending second civil war or insurgency against the US Government. Calls for revolution may especially resonate with MVEs, who often justify violence based on their belief that they are guardians of the Constitution and the legacies of the American Revolution. While they may not necessarily share the partisan views of those who engaged in the 6 January breach, MVEs and other DVEs who adhere to the "boogaloo" concept and seek a politically motivated civil war, and RMVEs who seek a race war may exploit the aftermath of the Capitol breach by conducting attacks to destabilize and force a climactic conflict in the United States. These factors, and the broad perception among DVEs that the violent breach was successful, may contribute to DVEs' willingness to carry out sporadic, lone actor or small cell violence. Such DVE violence may be targeted against racial, ethnic, and/or religious minorities and associated institutions, journalists, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and other targets common among some DVEs.

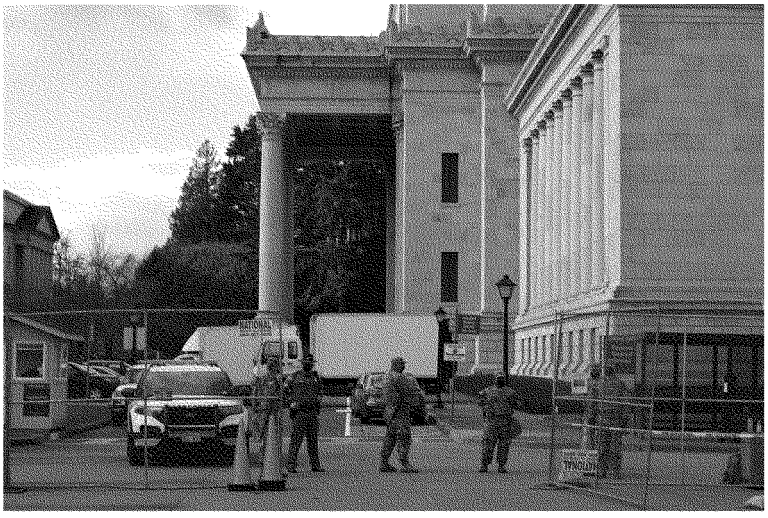
Excerpt from an intelligence bulletin that warns that extremists groups targeting the presidential inauguration "may exploit the aftermath of the Capitol breach by conducting attacks to destabilize and force a climactic conflict in the United States." Obtained by The New York Times

Officials warned of possible activity by the "boogaloo," a movement that seeks to start a second civil war. They also wrote that "the shared false narrative of a 'stolen' election,'" a narrative that has been perpetuated by President Trump, "may lead some individuals to adopt the belief that there is no political solution to address their grievances and violent action is necessary."

Antigovernment militias and extremist groups "very likely pose the greatest domestic terrorism threats in the 2021," said the bulletin, which was dated Jan. 13.

Already, state and local officials are taking preparations into their own hands.

In Oregon, Gov. Kate Brown activated the National Guard "to assist with potential upcoming civil unrest," the Oregon State Police said Wednesday. Authorities did not identify the locations the National Guard would be deployed, but troops in neighboring Washington State have used the Guard in recent days to protect the state's Capitol building.



Members of the Washington National Guard stand with a Washington State Patrol trooper at a perimeter fence around the Legislative Building in Olympia, Wash. Ted S. Warren/Associated Press

"The recent events at our Nation's Capitol building and at our own statehouse illustrate the need for law enforcement to be prepared and appropriately staffed for any large gatherings," Oregon State Police Superintendent Terri Davie said in a statement.

The National Guard was also assisting in state capitols in Michigan and Wisconsin.

Law enforcement presence has intensified at the California State Capitol in Sacramento, with California Highway Patrol officers on standby and outside at the entrances, and with squad cars parked on the grounds, blocking walkways. The F.B.I. has set up a joint command post with local authorities in Sacramento, and members of state, federal and local law enforcement have been meeting daily.

Even though Los Angeles officials have not received specific threats, the chief of the Los Angeles Police Department has ordered all officers, close to 10,000 people, to be in uniform every day leading up to the inauguration so they are ready to be deployed at a moment's notice. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department has adjusted staffing levels in anticipation of protest activity.

Part of the challenge for law enforcement agencies collecting intelligence was weeding out "aspirational" commentary, said Chief Colina of Miami. On the call Wednesday, the F.B.I. acknowledged the uneasiness felt across the nation in the wake of the attack on the U.S.

Capitol, he said.

"It kind of shook everyone up, you know, seeing what happened at the Capitol. It gives you a terrible feeling of uneasiness, and so, they're concerned with that," he said, adding, "They're concerned with the mind-set of, 'Are we safe here in this country?'"

John Eligon reported from Kansas City, Frances Robles from Miami and Zolan Kanno-Youngs and Helene Cooper from Washington. Contributing reporting were Adam Goldman from Washington; Mike Baker from Seattle; Shawn Hubler from Sacramento, Simon Romero from Albuquerque; Richard Fausset in Atlanta; Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio in New York; Julie Bosman in Chicago and Tim Arango and Manny Fernandez in Los Angeles.

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Helene Cooper is a Pentagon correspondent. She was previously an editor, diplomatic correspondent and White House correspondent, and was part of the team awarded the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting, for its coverage of the Ebola epidemic. @helenecooper

A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: U.S. Authorities Warn of Threat By Extremists

The Biden Transition ›

Answers to your questions about Inauguration Day:

What will the inauguration look like?

Joseph R. Biden Jr. will become president of the United States at noon on Jan. 20 in a scaled-back inauguration ceremony. While key elements will remain traditional, many events will be downsized and "reimagined" to better adapt the celebration to a nation battling the coronavirus. Mr. Biden will be sworn in by Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. on the Capitol's West Front sometime before noon. The new president is then expected give his inaugural address and conduct a review of military troops, as is tradition. But instead of a traditional parade before cheering spectators along Pennsylvania Avenue as the new president, vice president and their families make their way to the White House over a mile away, there will be an official escort with representatives from every branch of the military for one city block

representatives from every branch of the military for one city block.

Will President Trump attend?

Who will attend? And can I attend?

Why is a presidential inauguration so important?

Capitol Building Riot Security Failures; Interview With Former White House Chief of Staff John Kelly. Aired 4-4:30p ET

CNN The Lead with Jake Tapper 4:00 PM EST

January 7, 2021 Thursday

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Length: 4150 words

Byline: Manu Raju, Kaitlan Collins, Jake Tapper

Guests: John Kelly

Highlight: White House Chief of Staff John Kelly discusses whether President Trump should be removed from office. Investigations begin into the security failures that led to the storming of the Capitol Building.

Body

[16:00:00]

JAKE TAPPER, CNN HOST: The attack committed by a violent mob President Trump's supporters after he encouraged them to -- quote -- "walk down Pennsylvania Avenue" and -- quote -- "take back our country."

That's what this group of domestic terrorists attempted to do. In this video captured by BlazeTV, you can see members of this mob descending on the Capitol, violently shoving police, breaking through barriers outside the Capitol, a mob fueled by President Trump's lies and conspiracy theories.

President Trump has so far refused to condemn the violence by his supporters. And now there are serious discussions about removing him from office.

This afternoon, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said the 25th Amendment should be used to remove President Trump from office, and, if not, Democrats may pursue impeachment. Pelosi joins Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and Republican Congressman Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, all because of very grave concerns of what Trump might do in these last 13 days before he leaves office.

In the early hours of the morning, Congress confirmed what we have known to be true for months: President-elect Biden won the 2020 presidential election, though that confirmation came only after 138 members of the House and eight senators objected.

They aligned themselves with the same disgraceful conspiracy theories that inspired the bloodshed at the Capitol. Senator Hawley, Senator Cruz, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, and 143 others, this is their legacy. In many ways, each one of them has blood on his hands.

And now a member of President Trump's Cabinet has joined the administration resignations following this attack on the U.S. Capitol, transportation Secretary Elaine Chao.

CNN's Kaitlan Collins joins me now.

And, Kaitlan, Speaker Pelosi is now saying President Trump must be removed from office using the 25th Amendment. Is anyone on -- in the Cabinet, which is actually the body responsible for using the 25th Amendment, are they on board? KAITLAN COLLINS, CNN WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: So far, no one has said so publicly. But we do know that the House speaker tried to call the vice president earlier today. She did not successfully get through to him. It's not clear if he's actually going to call her back, given he knows probably what it is that she's calling about, given she has made it so clear.

But there are these growing conversations happening about removing the president from power in his final days in office, given the chaos that we saw play out yesterday. And they are now being led by the House speaker, Nancy Pelosi, Jake, who held this remarkable press conference earlier today where she was calling out members of the Cabinet, asking if they're really going to let the president stay in office for the next 13 days and, she said -- quote -- "assault democracy" while doing so.

And, of course, this comes as one of those key Cabinet officials who could have played a role in this just announced that she is going to resign because of what the president did yesterday.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

COLLINS (voice-over): Washington is still reeling today after a mob of President Trump supporters incited by his lies breached the Capitol and wreaked havoc on a sacred constitutional process.

President Trump didn't appear publicly today, as aides who were shaken by his behavior headed for the exits. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao became the first member of Trump's Cabinet to resign in protest today, telling staff in an e-mail that what happened in Washington was a -- quote -- "traumatic and entirely avoidable event," adding, "It has deeply troubled me in a way that I simply cannot set aside."

Chao, who is married to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, joins over half-a-dozen officials who have now resigned...

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: That's right. We own it!

COLLINS: ... including Trump's deputy national security adviser and his former chief of staff who was serving as a special envoy.

MICK MULVANEY, FORMER ACTING WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF: I can't stay here, not after yesterday. You can't look at that yesterday and think I want to be a part of that in any way, shape or form.

COLLINS: Even those who used to work for Trump are breaking with him.

Former Attorney General Bill Barr rebuked the president in a statement that read: "Orchestrating a mob to pressure Congress is inexcusable. The president's conduct yesterday was a betrayal of his office."

Fearful of mass resignations, Trump committed to a peaceful transition of power overnight in a statement that had to be posted to an aide's Twitter account because his was suspended.

Trump said: "Even though I totally disagree with the outcome, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless, there will be an orderly transition January 20."

DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: We love you. You're very special.

COLLINS: His words had less to do with a change in heart, after sympathizing with those on Capitol Hill, and more to do with growing conversations about removing him from office using the 25th Amendment.

REP. NANCY PELOSI (D-CA): If the vice president and the Cabinet do not act, the Congress may be prepared to move forward with impeachment. My members are very much interested, as my phone is exploding with impeach, impeach, impeach.

COLLINS: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi calling Trump a very dangerous person.

PELOSI: This is urgent. This is emergency of the highest magnitude.

COLLINS: Though invoking the 25th Amendment is unlikely to happen, at least one Republican is joining in on the call.

REP. ADAM KINZINGER (R-IL): The president is unfit and the president is unwell, and the president must now relinquish control of the executive branch voluntarily or involuntary.

[16:05:07]

COLLINS: Sources tell CNN that former national security officials are urging the secretary of state, director of national intelligence and the national security adviser not to resign, so a political crisis doesn't become a national security one.

Trump's relationship with the vice president is also at an all-time low, as CNN has learned he called him a vulgarity once Pence made clear he wouldn't do the president's bidding and would instead comply with the Constitution.

MIKE PENCE, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: The votes for president of the United States are as follows. Joseph R. Biden Jr. of the state of Delaware has received 306 votes. Donald J. Trump of the state of Florida has received 232 votes.

The chair declares the joint session dissolved.

(APPLAUSE)

(END VIDEOTAPE)

COLLINS: Now, Jake, what plays out between the president and vice president over the next two weeks will be fascinating to watch, because we do not believe they have spoken since what happened yesterday.

But Pence is not the only one that the president is on the outs with. There are several more Cabinet members coming forward to express displeasure with how he acted yesterday. Another one is a Trump favorite, the ag secretary, Sonny Perdue, who came out and said he is disappointed in the president's actions yesterday, and he does not believe that he should have supported those who were, of course, not in support of a peaceful transfer of power in a few weeks from now.

TAPPER: All right. Kaitlan Collins, thank you so much. Appreciate that report.

Joining me on the phone is retired Marine General John Kelly, President Trump's former chief of staff and the former secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

General Kelly, thanks so much for joining us.

I know you have been distressed by a lot of the things you have seen since leaving the White House. What was your reaction to what you saw yesterday?

JOHN KELLY, FORMER WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF: Well, I was horrified.

It's an unbelievable scene at the Capitol. Frankly, the president's action and words didn't surprise me at all, but I was very, very surprised that those people would assault the people's house, do the damage they did, and embarrass us all.

TAPPER: Attorney General Barr has accused President Trump of -- quote -- "orchestrating a mob to pressure Congress."

Do you agree? And do you think that President Trump has blood on his hands? There were four people killed yesterday.

KELLY: You know, the president knows who he's talking to when he tweets or when he makes statements. He knows who he's talking to. He knows what he wants them to do.

And the fact that he said the things, he has been saying the things he has been saying since the election, and encouraging people, no surprise, again, at what happened yesterday.

TAPPER: How much blame do you lay at the feet of those who, along with the president, have pushed these deranged election lies, Senator Cruz or Kevin McCarthy?

KELLY: Well, I -- my strong feeling is, so long as there was a possibility in the courts that the election could be proven to be inaccurate or fraudulent or something, the process is designed to work, and it was working.

I'm just surprised at members of Congress -- you know, and they have to look themselves in the mirror -- but just surprised at members of Congress that were encouraging, not necessarily the behavior yesterday, but encouraging the president.

And there's very, very few -- certainly, I -- this is two years ago this month I left the White House. Very, very few of them were looking the president in the eye and telling him what he was considering -- this is back then -- what he was considering was wrong or whatever. But, as I say, they have to live with themselves. But I don't believe they were encouraging that action at the Capitol yesterday.

TAPPER: No, I guess not, but I guess the point is, when you see this angry mob, they have been fed these lies now for years, but specifically about the election since November.

And they were obviously -- they believed them. They believed these lies. And it's not just President Trump telling them. It's people -- it's anchors at a -- at other news channels. I shouldn't say news -- anchors at other channels, and Kevin McCarthy, and Hawley.

And 126 members of the House, Republicans, signed on to that crazy lawsuit from the attorney general of Texas.

Do they bear some responsibility, I guess, because, I mean, these -- this mob was angry because they have been -- they believed these lies.

KELLY: I mean, at some level, some responsibility, for sure.

But, again, the -- it was the president over these weeks and months that has been stirring these folks up. And what happened yesterday was probably somewhat predictable.

And, again, his response yesterday afternoon was just -- was just totally ridiculous.

[16:10:06]

And I watched President Biden's speech yesterday afternoon. I saw Mitch McConnell's comments before the riot. There are two men talking to the country in the way the country needs to be spoken to. And the president, in my view, has never spoken to the country. He has just spoken to his base.

TAPPER: There's now talk of invoking the 25th Amendment to try to get the Cabinet to remove the president from office.

It's not just Democrats saying it. It's Republicans, too, including the congressman from Illinois, former Republican Congressman Paul Mitchell of Michigan.

Do you support such an action? Should he be removed by the Cabinet?

KELLY: I think, Jake, that the Cabinet should meet and have a discussion.

I don't think it will happen. But I think the Cabinet should meet and discuss this, because the behavior yesterday and the weeks and months before that have just been outrageous from the president.

And what happened on Capitol Hill yesterday is a direct result of his poisoning the minds of people with the lies and the frauds.

TAPPER: The -- you were a former member of the Cabinet, in according -- in addition to being a White House chief of staff. If you were in the Cabinet right now, would you vote to remove him from office?

KELLY: Yes, I would.

The one thing we have going for us here, Jake, is, it's only 13 more days. No one -- as indicated yesterday by our vice president, no one around him anymore is going to break the law. He can give all the -- all the orders he wants. No one is going to break the law.

And we saw Mike Pence, Vice President Pence, stand his ground yesterday.

TAPPER: Nobody around him will, but he has got this mob of ardent supporters who are willing to break the law. Are you worried about what he might do in these last 13 days?

KELLY: You know, no longer.

I mean, again, this -- this has so enraged -- what happened yesterday so enraged the country and has turned most of the country back on to the right course. And that is a course that no longer listens to Donald Trump.

Sure, there will be some -- the core of the core. But I wouldn't worry too much about it.

And we have magnificent police, federal agents. Everyone's on heightened alert. I wouldn't worry about it. And I know you have people like Chris Wray at the FBI and -- well, all of them, all of the leadership in law enforcement and the intel, working to prevent anything that he might want to do in the next 13 days.

And I would also argue, Jake, for these people, particularly the people in our national security, Homeland Security, DOD, Chris Wray, to stay on the job. Don't resign. We need people at the top to see this thing through. It's only 13 more days.

TAPPER: Do you worry what it might mean for the nation if there end up being no consequences for President Trump, beyond his losing the election?

KELLY: No, I think -- I'm not a lawyer, but I think his actions yesterday and before that, his phone calls to the Georgia delegation -- or to the officials, I mean, I think these things have to be looked into.

But, most importantly, most importantly, he's gone in 13 days.

TAPPER: Multiple people told CNN that President Trump was borderline enthusiastic over the riots. Does that surprise you?

KELLY: Not at all.

I mean, I -- again, I worked very, very closely every day for 18 months with the president. And from a distance, you have -- it's impossible to understand who he actually is. But when you work closely with him, you understand very, very -- he's a very, very flawed human being. It doesn't surprise me.

In fact, when I left the White House, I really implored the president to not -- to hire the right guy to be his chief of staff, someone who will tell him the truth, someone who will try to keep him on the straight and narrow. I said, please don't hire a bootlicker or a yes- man, because you will be impeached.

And I -- and towards the end of my time there, all I ever heard from some of the real devotees in the White House was, you got to let Trump be Trump, let Trump be Trump.

My replacement -- well, let me just say, this is what happens. Yesterday and other things he has done in the last two years comes as a result of letting Trump be Trump.

[16:15:03]

TAPPER: Well, your replacement was Mick Mulvaney, who is obviously one of Trump's biggest enablers when he was chief of staff.

He's now resigned from the Trump administration. He was on -- he had some position, but not -- he wasn't chief of staff anymore.

He explained in an op-ed that President Trump, in his view, is -- quote -- "not the same as he was eight months ago" -- unquote.

Is that true, or is Mulvaney engaging in some revisionism to try to save his reputation, or what's left of it?

KELLY: Well, again, I go back three-and-a-half years.

I didn't know the president before I took the job as -- at DHS. I was there for six months. I very seldom saw the president, mostly because what I was seeing in the White House was pretty chaotic. And, again, I don't need to be too close to the flagpole.

When I took over, when I was drafted into the chief's position, I got to know the president very, very, very well. I don't think he has changed one little bit.

You know, when the guardrails are off, it's very predictable that he will do the kind of things he has been doing. And, of course, he's enraged because he has lost an election. He's a laughingstock now. And he's striking out.

But, again, someone -- someone needs to help manage him. And I don't think those people took up the task when I left.

TAPPER: Right.

KELLY: It was hard enough when I was there.

TAPPER: Right. KELLY: But, as I used to say to the president, you can fire me. I will be a hero. I can quit. I will be a hero. You need to listen to me, sir. You need to listen to me. And you need to listen to the Cabinet and the experts we bring in here and make the best decisions for our country, not -- well, for our country.

TAPPER: The -- I guess one of the big mysteries of the -- not mysteries, but one of the big debates that I always have when it comes to his completely unacceptable behavior, and the disgraceful day that we had yesterday in American history, just an absolute -- just a black eye for this country, is, does he believe these lies that he tells about the election?

Does he not understand that all the information he's getting from the Breitbarts and the Alex Joneses of the world is false? Or does he have a psychological issue that I can't diagnose?

What do you think?

KELLY: Well, look, I would just tell you that he -- he believes what he believes. And he will go and find people that will give him the opinion he's looking for, and then carry that ball, hopefully, across some goal line.

As I say, he's a very, very flawed man. I'm not a psychiatrist. I could never -- I could never address anything that has to do with mental health. I would just say very flawed man who has got some serious character issues.

But, again, if he had had a staff and people around him that could help manage and control -- not control, but help manage him, so he could make the right decisions, but he's -- he's not -- he doesn't like that. And you don't survive by telling this president the truth, for very long anyway.

TAPPER: I do want to ask you, just as a former secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, about what we saw yesterday.

Are you concerned by the fact that these rioters, insurrectionists, terrorists, were able to breach the Capitol? You had members of Congress, people who had fought in wars sheltering in place.

Obviously, the mob is responsible for the violence, and they were incited by the president and his son and his lawyer. But to what degree was this a failure by the U.S. Capitol Police and other law enforcement agencies?

KELLY: Well, again, I was just reading something on one of the Web sites that the mayor of the city had asked the federal government not to deploy in the way that they had done before.

I will take that as -- it's reporting. I will take it as truthful.

But one of the things you do in cases like that is, you worst-case them. And you gather sufficient force, in this case, police force. So, in my opinion, they should have had hundreds of police, not only around the Capitol, but a quick-reaction group that could then -- in their hundreds, that could then deploy if things got out of hand.

I can remember, as a kid, during the Vietnam riots. And they moved hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops up from North Carolina, Marines and soldiers, and staged them all at Andrews Air Force Base, just in case.

There was no just-in-case force there yesterday, and there should have been.

[16:20:04]

And, again, they -- there should be investigations as to why, and people that made the wrong call should be dealt with. But there was insufficient force there to deal with those people.

And my hat is off to the police. I love the police. But the leadership somewhere above them all, the uniformed men and women, let us down. And it may have been the mayor. It may have been the Capitol Police. I don't know. But it needs to be looked into.

TAPPER: Lastly, sir, we do appreciate your calling in. This is a rare interview.

I do have to ask you, though. Some people have criticized you and others, like General Mattis and the rest, for working for President Trump for -- to begin with, and then, after you left, for not decrying him publicly more forcefully or sooner.

Why not? What do you say to them?

KELLY: Well, I...

(LAUGHTER)

KELLY: I would tell you, when you -- when you first meet or start working with him, in my case, at least, no idea at the flaws.

And when you start working for him, and begin to understand how flawed he is, then it's a matter of staying in the job as long as you can stand it to try to prevent some disaster.

So, when I went to work for him -- I mean, I had spent my entire life in service to the country. This was another opportunity to serve my country. And once in, I stood it as long as I could, until I left.

And, again, as a retired military officer, particularly a senior military officer, to try to preserve the civil-military relationship that's so important to our country, our democracy, it is very unusual for senior military officers to speak out against elected officials.

Now, in my view, the reason I'm on the phone with you right now is, the election is over. And I wanted to try to put some perspective into what took place yesterday.

But, again, as all of us look at what happened yesterday, we really need to step back and decide, how do we fix ourselves? Listen to the words of Joe Biden and Mitch McConnell yesterday. And we need to start this healing process. This is nuts.

But that's why I have not spoken out forcefully against him. I think it's inappropriate for a senior military officer to do so, particularly when there's an election pending.

TAPPER: Retired Marine General and former White House Chief of Staff John Kelly, thank you so much for your time. And, as always, sir, thank you for your service, and best to you and your family.

And, yes, let us have some healing now.

KELLY: Thanks.

TAPPER: The FBI, Homeland Security, Capitol Hill Police, they're all in D.C. So, how did these domestic terrorists storm the nation's Capitol?

The growing questions about the bungled security -- shattered windows, weapons, weed. CNN goes inside with new images as that mob stormed the Capitol.

Stay with us.

[16:27:11]

TAPPER: In our politics lead today: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is demanding the resignation of the U.S. Capitol Police chief, after pro- Trump terrorists and insurrectionists were able to breach the U.S. Capitol while in an attempted insurrection.

Pelosi says that the House sergeant at arms has also informed her that he is resigning, as lawmakers from both sides of the aisle demand an investigation into how yesterday unfolded, as CNN's Manu Raju reports.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: That's right. We own it! We own you!

MANU RAJU, CNN SENIOR CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): The day after deadly mob violence took over the Capitol, lawmakers were still struggling to comprehend how one of the nation's most fortified buildings could have been breached and their lives put in danger.

The damage still visible through the corridors of the Capitol, where pro-Trump rioters broke windows, forced their way through emergency exits, stormed through all corners of the building. Even House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's suite, typically heavily guarded, was vandalized, with a trespasser, breaking in shattering a mirror and leaving behind a threatening note, all while demonstrators removed her nameplate.

PELOSI: Justice will be done to those who carried out these acts, which were acts of sedition and acts of cowardice.

RAJU: The terrorists struck throughout the Capitol, forcing both the Senate and House to go on lockdown, just as Congress was preparing to verify Joe Biden's Electoral College win over President Trump.

But the riled-up pro-Trump crowd instead tried to break into the House chamber, where lawmakers were sheltering in place. One woman was shot and killed by the U.S. Capitol Police. Another rioter broke a window on the chamber's door, prompting an armed standoff with Capitol Police and many frightened lawmakers inside.

REP. RAUL RUIZ (D-CA): It was the closest I got to thinking, there's a possibility I could die. So, at any moment, somebody could have rushed in the door with a semiautomatic.

RAJU: Others were trying to think outside the box.

REP. JASON CROW (D-CO): I had a pen in my pocket that I could use as a weapon. I was looking for other weapons as well. And then I was coordinating with the Capitol Police to try to find a way out for us.

RAJU: In both chambers, a bipartisan call to condemn the violence and proceed with confirming Biden's victory, which Trump has been trying to stop.

SEN. MITCH MCCONNELL (R-KY): We will not bow to lawlessness or intimidation.

RAJU: And in the halls of the Capitol, Republicans and Democrats placing the blame squarely on Trump's refusal to acknowledge reality and his lies about his election laws.

SEN. JOHN THUNE (R-SD): Had we not had senators who decided to object, we probably wouldn't have had that many people in town, if the president hadn't encouraged them all to come to town.

And there was a lot of anger and a lot of emotion based upon, in most cases, just a lot of false information. You know, they were convinced of things that weren't so.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

[16:30:00]

Load-Date: January 7, 2021

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Commentary

JANUARY 06, 2021 AMERICAN SOCIETY

Donald Trump Should Be Impeached and Removed from Office Tomorrow

by John Podhoretz

I WATCHED AS THE PRESIDENT SPOKE AT HIS RALLY EARLIER TODAY AND SAID HE would go with the crowd to the Capitol to make sure their feelings were known. I heard the president threaten Mike Pence with his unhappiness should Pence refuse to prevent the certification of the electors—just after Pence had released a statement saying he had no authority to do any such thing.

This rally itself happened because Trump called for it. The crowds gathered because Trump called for them. They moved to the Capitol down the Mall because Trump said they should. The breach of the Capitol is Trump's fault. Some in the crowd have stormed the Congress.

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John Podhoretz is the editor of *Commentary*.

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JOINT STATEMENT FROM ELECTIONS INFRASTRUCTURE GOVERNMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL & THE ELECTION INFRASTRUCTURE SECTOR COORDINATING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

Original release date: November 12, 2020

WASHINGTON – The members of Election Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council (GCC) Executive Committee – Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Assistant Director Bob Kolasky, U.S. Election Assistance Commission Chair Benjamin Hovland, National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) President Maggie Toulouse Oliver, National Association of State Election Directors (NASED) President Lori Augino, and Escambia County (Florida) Supervisor of Elections David Stafford – and the members of the Election Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Council (SCC) – Chair Brian Hancock (Unisyn Voting Solutions), Vice Chair Sam Derheimer (Hart InterCivic), Chris Wlaschin (Election Systems & Software), Ericka Haas (Electronic Registration Information Center), and Maria Bianchi (Democracy Works) - released the following statement:

"The November 3rd election was the most secure in American history. Right now, across the country, election officials are reviewing and double checking the entire election process prior to finalizing the result.

"When states have close elections, many will recount ballots. All of the states with close results in the 2020 presidential race have paper records of each vote, allowing the ability to go back and count each ballot if necessary. This is an added benefit for security and resilience. This process allows for the identification and correction of any mistakes or errors. **There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was in any way compromised.**

"Other security measures like pre-election testing, state certification of voting equipment, and the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's (EAC) certification of voting equipment help to build additional confidence in the voting systems used in 2020.

"While we know there are many unfounded claims and opportunities for misinformation about the process of our elections, we can assure you we have the utmost confidence in the security and integrity of our elections, and you should too. When you have questions, turn to electi

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trusted voices as they administer elections."

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Topics: Election Security

Keywords: CISA, Election security

Last Published Date: November 12, 2020

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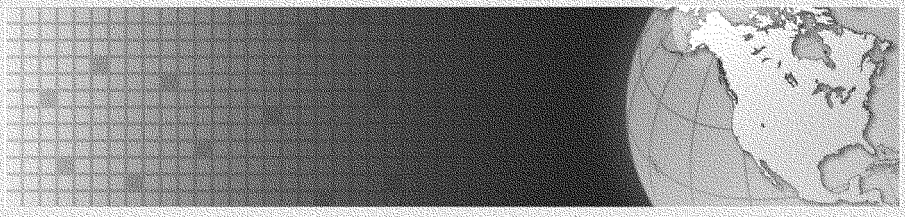
JOINT THREAT ASSESSMENT



(U) 59th Presidential Inauguration, Washington, DC

14 January 2021

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Homeland Security

National Capital Region Threat Intelligence Consortium

United States Secret Service

Northern Virginia Regional Intelligence Center

United States Park Police

Virginia Fusion Center

United States Capitol Police

Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia

Joint Force Headquarters National Capitol Region

Office of Intelligence and Analysis
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(U) 59th Presidential Inauguration
Washington, DC
20 January 2021

(U) Scope Note

(U//FOUO) This *Joint Threat Assessment* (*JTA*) addresses threats to the 59th Presidential Inauguration taking place in Washington, DC, on 20 January 2021. This JTA is co-authored by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/US Secret Service (USSS), with input from multiple US Intelligence Community and law enforcement partners. It does not include acts of non-violent civil disobedience (i.e., protests without a permit), which are outside the scope of federal law enforcement jurisdiction.

(U//FOUO) This product is intended to support federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government agencies and authorities in identifying priorities, as well as private sector security partners, for protective measures and support activity regarding terrorism and other existing or emerging threats to homeland security. Information in this assessment is current and accurate as of 14 January 2021.

(U) Key Findings

(U//FOUO) As of 14 January 2021, the FBI, DHS, USSS, US Capitol Police (USCP), National Capital Region Threat Intelligence Consortium (NTIC), Joint Force Headquarters-National Capital Region (JFHQ-NCR), Virginia Fusion Center (VFC) and the Northern Virginia Regional Intelligence Center (NVRIC), Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia (MPDC), and US Park Police (USPP) assess that domestic violent extremists (DVEs) pose the most likely threat to the 59th Presidential Inauguration in Washington, DC, on 20 January 2021 due to recent incidents of ideologically motivated violence, including at the US Capitol Building.[a] In light of the storming of the US Capitol on 6 January, planned events in Washington, DC, in the lead up to and day of Inauguration Day offer continued opportunities for violence targeting public officials, government buildings, and federal and local law enforcement.

(U//FOUO) Additionally, unaffiliated lone offenders and homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) remain a concern due to their ability to act with little to no warning, willingness to attack civilians and soft targets, and ability to inflict significant casualties with weapons that do not

[a] (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define domestic violent extremists (DVEs) as individuals based and operating primarily within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power who seek to further political or social goals, wholly or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute violent extremism and may be constitutionally protected.

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require specialized knowledge, access, or training.[b,c] Additionally, foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) continue to express their intent related to attacking mass gatherings, landmarks, and critical infrastructure present in the National Capital Region (NCR).

(U//FOUO) Since the incident at the US Capitol on 6 January, Russian, Iranian, and Chinese influence actors have seized the opportunity to amplify narratives in furtherance of their policy interest amid the presidential transition. We have not identified any specific, credible information indicating that these actors intend to explicitly commit violence. Furthermore, we have not identified any specific, credible cyber threat to critical infrastructure supporting the upcoming Presidential Inauguration nor a specific credible cyber threat to military or law enforcement personnel supporting the event.

(U//FOUO) In addition, we assess that unauthorized unmanned aircraft system (UAS) operations can disrupt law enforcement operations at the 59th Presidential Inauguration, present a hazard to civilians around the event, or delay the event's proceedings, though we possess no specific, credible information indicating malicious actors have plans to use UAS to target the 59th Presidential Inauguration. We also continue to maintain awareness of threat reporting suggesting acts of violence directed at law enforcement officers, US Government officials, or bystanders at the 59th Presidential Inauguration. In addition to the recent events at the US Capitol, in June 2020, law enforcement agencies and assisting partner agencies in the NCR observed individuals attempting to violently engage law enforcement officers and using incendiary devices such as fireworks and Molotov cocktails.

(U//FOUO) Domestic Violent Extremists

(U//FOUO) **We assess that DVEs pose the most likely threat to the Presidential Inauguration or associated events, particularly those who believe the incoming administration is illegitimate.** Recent ideologically-motivated violence in Washington, DC, underscores the symbolic nature of the NCR and DVEs' willingness to travel to events and violently engage law enforcement and their perceived adversaries. Recent violent interactions between law enforcement and DVEs at these events will likely exacerbate DVE grievances,

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[b] (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define a homegrown violent extremist (HVE) as a person of any citizenship who has lived or operated primarily in the United States or its territories who advocates, is engaged in, or is preparing to engage in ideologically motivated terrorist activities (including providing support to terrorism) in furtherance of political or social objectives promoted by a foreign terrorist organization, but is acting independently of direction by a foreign terrorist organization. HVEs are distinct from traditional domestic terrorists who engage in unlawful acts of violence to intimidate civilian populations or attempt to influence domestic policy without direction from or influence from a foreign actor.

[c] (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define a lone offender as an individual acting alone or without the willing support of others to further social or political goals, wholly or in part, through activities that involve unlawful acts of force or violence. Lone offenders may act within the context of recognized domestic violent extremist ideologies, their own interpretation of those ideologies, or personal beliefs. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute violent extremism, and may be constitutionally protected.

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particularly militia extremists.[d] The known standing date of Inauguration Day conceivably offers DVEs more time to plan acts of violence and open source reports indicate calls to violent action ahead of or on Inauguration Day. In particular, we are concerned about racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs), anti-government or anti-authority violent extremists, specifically militia extremists, and anarchist extremists targeting the events or perceived ideological opponents.[e,f,g]

- (U//FOUO) On 6 January 2021, multiple individuals used physical force to enter the Capitol Building during the certification of the presidential election, according to local Washington, DC, press reporting. During this incident, an officer killed one individual inside the Capitol and more than 50 MPD and USCP officers were injured, according to a USCP public statement. The individuals stormed both houses of Congress, smashing windows, assaulting police officers, and destroying property, forcing elected officials to seek safety in secure, shelter-in-place locations. Police arrested more than 70 individuals, many from out of state. Following the event, a USCP officer died from injuries received while physically engaging with rioters, according to open source reports.

- (U//FOUO) On 6 January 2021, MPD Explosive Ordinance and FBI Special Agent Bomb Technicians responded to reports of two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) at the headquarters of the Republican and Democratic National Committees, according to local Washington, DC, press reporting. On the same day, according to local law enforcement statements to local press reporters, a cooler was discovered filled with incendiary devices and a long gun on Capitol grounds.

- (U//FOUO) According to open source reports, calls for violent action online discuss targeting public officials, ideological opponents, and government property in the lead up to and during the inauguration. Open source media reporting notes that violent planning has begun for Inauguration Day on various social media platforms. Underscoring these

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[d] (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define militia extremists—which fall within the anti-government/anti-authority violent extremist threat category—as individuals who seek, wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence, to advance their ideology, based on their belief that the US government is purposely exceeding its Constitutional authority and is attempting to establish a totalitarian regime. Consequently, these individuals oppose many federal and state laws and regulations, particularly those related to firearms ownership. Militia extremists take overt steps to violently resist or facilitate the overthrow of the US Government. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute violent extremism and may be constitutionally protected.

[e] (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define anarchist extremists as individuals who seek, wholly or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence, to further their opposition to all forms of capitalism, corporate globalization, and governing institutions, which they perceive as harmful to society. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute violent extremism and may be constitutionally protected.

[f] (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS defines racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism as the threat that encompasses the potentially unlawful use or threat of force or violence, in furtherance of political and/or social agendas, which are deemed to derive from bias, often related to race or ethnicity, held by the actor against others, including a given population group.

[g] (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define anti-government or anti-authority violent extremism as the threat that encompasses the potentially unlawful use or threat of force or violence, in furtherance of political and/or social agendas, which are deemed to derive from anti-government or anti-authority sentiment, including opposition to perceived economic, social, or racial hierarchies; or perceived government overreach, negligence, or illegitimacy.

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reports, on 11 January 2021, the National Park Service (NPS) suspended tours of the Washington Monument through 24 January due to "credible threats to visitors and park resources" and continued threats to disrupt the inauguration, according to a NPS official statement. Nationwide, State Capitols are preparing for potential violence in their jurisdictions.

- (U//FOUO) On 12 December 2020, following an election-related protest in Washington, DC, four people were stabbed during a fight outside a bar. Media reports indicate the bar was being used as a gathering point for the Proud Boys[USPER], a self-described "western chauvinist organization". Prior to the stabbings, an identified USPER militia extremist and Florida resident burnt a Black Lives Matter flag at a church in the District. This individual was later arrested in Washington, DC, after they returned to participate in the protest on 6 January 2021 for destruction of property and possession of high-capacity firearm magazines. A judge ordered the individual to leave Washington, DC, and banned him from returning except for very limited conditions, including meeting with their attorney or attending a court date, according to *The Associated Press*[USPER] on 5 January 2021.

(U//FOUO) Inauguration Day follows a series of events in 2020 and 2021 that have fueled plotting and attacks, including COVID-19-related lockdown measures, grievances surrounding policing and police brutality, and perceptions of the presidential election and its result. We assess that these plots and attacks highlight the persistent and lethal threat DVEs pose to soft targets, government officials, and law enforcement.

- (U) According to ABC News[USPER] reporting as of 23 October 2020, an USPER militia extremist who self-described as a member of the "Boogaloo Bois" was charged with participating in a riot after they allegedly shot approximately 13 rounds from an AK-47 assault rifle into a Minneapolis, Minnesota Police Department building during the violence surrounding lawful protests following the death of George Floyd in late May 2020.[h] The USPER allegedly exchanged messages with another individual who was involved in killing a Federal Protective Service (FPS) contract security guard Protective Security Officer (PSO) in Oakland, California in late May 2020. Two additional "Boogaloo Bois" faced federal charges for their role in the Minneapolis riots.

- (U) According to a federal criminal complaint, as of 8 October 2020, alleged USPER individuals were arrested for planning to kidnap the Governor of Michigan prior to the November US presidential election. Group members, who included a Delaware resident, discussed the violent overthrow of certain government and law enforcement officials, to include multiple state governments they believed were violating the Constitution. In addition to making plans to kidnap the Michigan Governor, the group developed plans to

[h] (U//FOUO) "Boogaloo" is a colloquial term used by some violent extremists from a variety of movements—including some RMVEs that believe in the superiority of the white race, militia extremists, and anti-government extremists. The term refers to a coming civil war or the fall of civilization, according to a federal criminal complaint.

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attack the Michigan Capitol Building and planned to create a diversion for law enforcement during the kidnapping by demolishing a bridge. In addition, members of the group successfully detonated an IED wrapped with shrapnel to test its anti-personnel capabilities. The individuals were charged with making terrorist threats, material support for terrorist acts, gang membership, and firearms offenses.

- (U) On 29 May 2020, two USPERs who were known violent adherents of the Boogaloo movement, killed an FPS contract security guard PSO, who was stationed outside a federal building in Oakland, California, according to a June 2020 *Washington Post*[USPER] article. On 6 June 2020, one of the individuals was arrested for the death of a Santa Cruz County Sheriff Deputy and injuring another with an IED, according to open source reporting. A caller to 911 saw guns and bomb-making materials inside a van, and responding deputies encountered gunfire and IEDs as they approached the individual, according to the same source. One deputy was shot and killed on the scene, while another was either shot or struck by shrapnel and then struck by a vehicle as the individual fled the property, according to the same source. The individual pled not guilty to the charges of killing the sheriff's deputy, according to reporting from *The Air Force Times*[USPER] in August 2020.

(U//FOUO) Foreign Influence

(U//FOUO) Since the incident at the US Capitol on 6 January 2021, Russian, Iranian, and Chinese influence actors have seized the opportunity to amplify narratives in furtherance of their policy interest amid the presidential transition. We lack specific, credible information indicating that these actors and their identified proxies are seeking to commit violence. Our collection on these efforts, however, is limited by the number of actors on the Internet and we do note numerous mentions of the possibility of violence, as well as the amplification of grievance narratives that have been staples for actors seeking to provoke violence.[i]

- (U//FOUO) *Russian* state and proxy media outlets have amplified themes related to the violent and chaotic nature of the Capitol Hill incident, impeachment of President Trump, and social media censorship. In at least one instance, a Russian proxy claimed that ANTIFA members disguised themselves as supporters of President Trump, and were responsible for storming the Capitol building.

- (U//FOUO) *Iranian* state media has continued to stoke claims that President Trump encouraged and incited the violence, as well as calls to invoke the 25th amendment.

[i] (U) US persons linking to, citing, quoting, or voicing the same arguments raised by these foreign influence actors likely are engaging in First Amendment-protected activity, unless they are acting in concert with a threat actor. Furthermore, variants of the topics covered in this section, even those that include divisive terms, should not be assumed to reflect foreign influence or malign activity absent information specifically attributing the source of the messaging to malign foreign actors. This information should be considered in the context of all applicable legal and policy authorities to use open source information while protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.

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Iranian outlets also have amplified perceived concerns related to President Trump's mental health and the prospect of other risky actions he could take before leaving office.

- (U//FOUO) *Chinese* media have seized the story to denigrate US democratic governance—casting the United States as broadly in decline—and to justify China's crackdown on protestors in Hong Kong.

(U//FOUO) Homegrown Violent Extremists

(U//FOUO) At this time, we have not identified any actionable or credible threats to the 59th Presidential Inauguration involving HVEs. The unpredictable nature of HVEs and other lone offenders are of particular concern due to their ability to remain undetected until operational; their continued willingness to attack civilians and soft targets; and their willingness to carry out attacks using weapons that are easy to obtain and require little to no training. While HVE-related incidents in the United States and Western Europe targeted publicly accessible locations with little security, attacks or attempted attacks by the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) supporters indicate some terrorists remain undeterred in attempting to breach security at government facilities.

- (U) According to open source reporting from BBC News, as of 2 November 2020, a gunman opened fire in Vienna, Austria, killing approximately four people and wounding another 22 people. The gunman began the attack near the Seitenstettengasse Stadttempel synagogue, though it was unclear whether it was the primary target of the attack. Authorities identified the perpetrator, who was killed during the attack, as an ISIS supporter who was arrested in April 2019 for attempting to cross the Turkish border into Syria to join ISIS. The individual had been sentenced to 22 months in prison but was released in December 2019.

- (U) Open source reporting from the Associated Press, as of 29 October 2020, indicated a Tunisian national attacked two individuals in Nice, France, with a knife during morning mass at the Notre-Dame basilica. The attacker was seriously wounded by police and hospitalized in life-threatening condition after the attack. French authorities identified the attacker as a Tunisian national who was not previously known to counterterrorism authorities.

- (U) According to FBI Houston public statements, as of 21 May 2020, an individual drove onto a naval base in Corpus Christi, TX and opened fire on personnel. Additional reporting from *The New York Times*[USPER] from 21 May 2020 indicated one security guard was wounded and the attacker was killed during the incident. According to the same source, the individual's social media accounts revealed support for ISIS and al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

- (U) On 28 March 2019, a Maryland-based USPER was arrested and subsequently charged on 3 April 2019 with interstate transportation of a stolen vehicle after allegedly

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stealing a rental van from a parking garage in Alexandria, VA, according to a Department of Justice (DOJ) press release from April 2019. He was allegedly planning to run over pedestrians near the National Harbor in Fort Washington, MD. Authorities maintained that the individual was allegedly inspired by ISIS. On 28 August 2019, he was charged on a superseding indictment for attempting to provide material support to ISIS, according to ABC News press reporting from August 2019. A judge ruled in March 2020 that the individual be held for assessment as to whether he was mentally competent to stand trial, according to Washington, DC press reporting.

(U//FOUO) We assess that the consumption of online violent extremist media remains one of several significant influences identified by the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) in the radicalization and mobilization process of US-based violent extremists, and such messaging may be interpreted by ISIS or al-Qa'ida supporters as encouragement to target mass gatherings or high-profile events in the NCR.[j] Although the continued broadcast of pro-ISIS media contributes to the lone offender and HVE threat, including content depicting or referencing the NCR, we assess that this messaging does not indicate active plotting by ISIS or al-Qa'ida.

- (U//FOUO) On 18 October 2020, the ISIS media arm Al-Furqan Establishment released a 32-minute Arabic language audio production via Telegram to encourage ISIS supporters and fighters throughout the world to conduct attacks. The audio piece encouraged supporters who are unable to travel to conduct violent attacks in their own countries.

- (U) On 8 September 2020, Thabat Media released a message in Arabic and English praising a "record number" of global attacks in a single week. The publication claimed some of the targets were US and French military forces and boasted about al-Qa'ida's resilience on the anniversary of the invasion of "Manhattan." Thabat Media claimed more than 357 people were allegedly killed and more than 259 wounded in al-Qa'ida attacks, highlighting recent attacks in Afghanistan, Mali, and Somalia.

- (U) On 13 September 2020, AQAP released a lengthy publication titled "Who is the Victor?" commemorating the 9/11 attacks, which was distributed by the al-Malahem Media Foundation. The publication claimed the United States was a loser in its 19-year "War on Terror" and called on lone offenders to attack American interests worldwide.

[j] (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define radicalization as the process through which an individual changes from a nonviolent belief system to a belief system that includes the willingness to actively advocate, facilitate, or use unlawful violence as a method to affect societal or political change.

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(U//FOUO) Foreign Terrorist Organizations

(U//FOUO) We also remain concerned about the sustained interest of FTOs in attacking gatherings, landmarks, and critical infrastructure present in the NCR. Terrorist groups such as ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates remain intent on attacking Western targets and individuals, calling on individuals to conduct independent attacks in the United States using a range of weapons and tactics, including small arms and IEDs or improvised incendiary devices (IIDs). In addition, we remain concerned about Iran or its partner Hizballah seeking to conduct operations in the United States in response to the targeting of IRGC-Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani in January 2020.

- (U) According to Associated Press reporting as of May 2020, a Saudi Royal Air Force officer who was training at a naval base in Pensacola, Florida shot and killed three US sailors and wounded eight people on 6 December 2019 with a semi-automatic handgun before being killed during the incident. DOJ and FBI indicated the individual was in contact with al-Qa'ida operatives about planning and tactics in the months before the shooting.

- (U) Two weeks before the one-year anniversary of Soleimani's death, Iran's Supreme Leader renewed his promise of revenge, saying the United States will pay for the drone strike that killed the commander near the Baghdad airport on 3 January 2020.

(U//FOUO) Unmanned Aircraft System Concerns

(U//FOUO) Although we possess no specific, credible information indicating malicious actors have plans to use UASs to target the 59th Presidential Inauguration, we assess that unauthorized UAS operations can disrupt law enforcement operations, present a hazard to civilians around the event, or delay the event's proceedings. While there are no indications of threats to the event from a UAS standpoint, the technology from the easily accessible commercial off-the-shelf UAS platforms continues to advance and become more affordable. Overseas media examples include actors employing UASs for nefarious purposes that could potentially inspire US-based individuals to employ such tactics.[k]

- (U) On 18 September 2020, a Los Angeles, California-based USPER allegedly operated a UAS which struck a Los Angeles Police Department helicopter, forcing it to make an emergency landing, according to press reporting from CBS Los Angeles[USPER]. The UAS allegedly damaged the helicopter's nose, antenna, and bottom cowlings as well as a vehicle on the ground.

[k] (U//FOUO) Washington, DC, is a designated Flight Restricted Zone, meaning it is unlawful to pilot a UAS in the District of Columbia, and the area around the US Capitol Complex is designated as prohibited airspace. However, these designations may not deter someone intent on using an UAS for attack purposes or disruptive purposes.

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- (U) According to *Washington Post* press reporting, as of 5 August 2020, a Major League Baseball[USPER] game in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was delayed when an individual flew an unauthorized UAS over Target Field. The UAS departed the premises after causing a nine-minute delay to the game.

- (U) Reuters press reporting as of 12 April 2019 indicated an unauthorized UAS, which appeared to be a DJI Phantom, flew over Fenway Park in Boston, Massachusetts, during a baseball game. The user reportedly overrode the UAS's geofencing system designed to prevent flights over restricted areas, to include sporting events.

- (U) On 11 October 2019, an Ohio-based USPER pleaded guilty to unsafe operation of an aircraft for repeatedly operating a UAS within 200 feet of a Columbus, Ohio, Police Department helicopter on routine patrol on the evening of 9 July 2019, according to court documents and local press reporting from WBNS[USPER]. This activity endangered both those on-board and on the ground, according to the statements from a Columbus Police Department detective and is under investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). During their court appearance, the individual was fined and sentenced to one year of probation.

- (U) On 4 August 2018, up to three UASs, each carrying approximately one kilogram of C-4 explosives, detonated in Caracas, Venezuela, during a military parade in a likely attempt to target key Venezuelan politicians for attack, including the President, according to press reporting from *The New York Times* citing statements from Government of Venezuela officials. The attempted attack demonstrated the ability of a weaponized UAS to cause casualties and disrupt outdoor events/mass gatherings and highlights the viability of using UASs for targeted strikes, according to the same source.

(U//FOUO) Concerns of Violence and Criminal Activity During Lawful Protests

(U//FOUO) We remain concerned of potential violence directed toward public safety officials and bystanders due to observed violence surrounding lawful protests ongoing throughout the United States that began in May 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Louisville, Kentucky. We assess that acts of violence and criminal activity can take place with little or no warning and be directed toward law enforcement officers, public property, and bystanders around the White House and the National Mall.

- (U) MPD information as of 15 December 2020 indicated MPD had made five arrests and recovered approximately eight firearms during a First Amendment-protected event that took place in Washington, DC, in November 2020.

- (U) According to press reporting from ABC News as of 27 July 2020, local police in Portland, Oregon, identified a bag containing loaded rifle magazines and Molotov cocktails at a park near ongoing lawful protests on 26 July 2020.

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(U) According to NPR reporting as of 10 June 2020, individuals in Washington, DC, threw bottles at law enforcement officers and set fires to cars and to the basement of historic St. John's Church[USPER]. Additionally, according to press reporting from *The Washington Post* as of 3 June 2020, individuals launched fireworks and other projectiles at law enforcement officials deployed to Lafayette Square in Washington, DC.

(U//FOUO) Ideologically Motivated Malicious Cyber Actors

(U//FOUO) **We have not identified any specific credible cyber threat to critical infrastructure supporting the upcoming Presidential Inauguration, nor a specific credible cyber threat to military or law enforcement personnel supporting the event.** However, we note that it is relatively common to observe ideologically motivated cyber actors use high-profile events and symbolic targets to attempt to disrupt public and private sector networks, mainly as a means of elevating their ideology or message. We are unaware of DVE groups, which we assess pose the most likely physical threat to the inauguration, displaying cyber capabilities in the past that would be impactful to the event. Malicious cyber actors, unaffiliated with DVEs and potentially even including foreign adversaries, could also seize this period of Presidential transition to conduct disruptive cyber or influence operations for various purposes.

- (U//FOUO) Although we have no reason to suspect connections or similar motivations between DVEs and these previous incidents, since mid-2020 we have observed numerous criminal cyber-attacks conducted by suspected anonymous-affiliated criminal cyber actors, including the compromise of and distributed denial-of-service attacks (DDoS) against state government networks; doxing of law enforcement personnel; and unsubstantiated claims of shutting down law enforcement and state and local government networks.

- (U//FOUO) Iranian Government actors since at least October 2020 engaged in cyber and influence efforts designed to spread anti-American messaging and disinformation about the 2020 presidential election. This included the sending of spoofed e-mails in mid-October 2020 with messages of voter intimidation appearing to come from the Proud Boys to intimidate voters in at least Alaska and Florida, according to the same sources. Iranian state media reacted to these deceptive October voter intimidation e-mails by amplifying a nexus between the Proud Boys and President Trump.

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(U) Event Overview

(U//FOUO) The 59th Presidential Inauguration will take place on 20 January 2021 outside of the US Capitol Building. Attendees will include members of Congress, Supreme Court Justices, various high-ranking government officials, and other guests. It will be broadcast live by the major television networks and cable news channels. The DHS Secretary declared it as a National Special Security Event (NSSE) in an official memorandum dated 24 September 2018. The 59th Presidential Inauguration is anticipated to include events tentatively scheduled on 19 January 2021, 20 January 2021, and 21 January 2021.

(U) Potential Threat Indicators

(U//FOUO) Absent a specific, actionable threat to the 59th Presidential Inauguration, we are providing indicators to aid law enforcement and first responders in identifying and mitigating threats. The totality of behavioral indicators and other relevant circumstances should be evaluated when considering any law enforcement response or action. (Note: Behaviors associated with the below indicators can include constitutionally protected activities. The FBI does not initiate any investigative activity based solely on the exercise of First Amendment activities or on the race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity of the subject, or a combination of only such factors.)

(U//FOUO) Possible indicators of pre-operational surveillance or attack planning include:

- (U//FOUO) Documenting or recording the locations of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras, police, fire, hospitals, and other key infrastructure facilities, without a reasonable alternative explanation;
- (U//FOUO) Prestaging of objects that can be used as weapons, such as bricks, rocks, poles, and other potential weapons;
- (U//FOUO) Unusual or prolonged interest in or attempts to gain sensitive information about security measures of personnel, entry points, peak days and hours of operation, or access controls such as alarms or locks to secure areas;
- (U//FOUO) Unexplained attempts to acquire medical equipment, emergency personnel uniforms, ambulances, or vehicles that can be converted into ambulances;
- (U//FOUO) Unusual or prolonged interest in security reaction drills or procedures, or the presence of multiple false alarms or fictitious emergency calls to same locations or similar venues without a reasonable alternative explanation;
- (U//FOUO) Discreet use of cameras or video recorders, drones, sketching, or note-taking consistent with pre-operational surveillance;

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- (U//FOUO) Unusual interest in speaking with building maintenance personnel without a reasonable alternative explanation;

- (U//FOUO) Unusual observation of or questions about facility security measures, including barriers, restricted areas, cameras, and intrusion detection systems without a reasonable alternative explanation;

- (U//FOUO) Unusual observation of or questions about facility air conditioning, heating, and ventilation systems without a reasonable alternative explanation;

- (U//FOUO) Suspicious purchases of dual-use items that could be used to construct an explosive device to create an explosive diversion, including hydrogen peroxide, acetone, gasoline, propane, or fertilizer without a reasonable alternative explanation;

- (U//FOUO) Suspicious activities in storage facilities or other areas that could be used to construct an explosive device; and

- (U//FOUO) Attempted or actual unauthorized access to rooftops or other potentially sensitive areas without a reasonable alternative explanation.

(U//FOUO) Possible indicators of threats involving UASs include:

- (U//FOUO) Beginner-level hobbyists attempting to purchase expensive, difficult-to-fly UASs in a manner that would arouse suspicion of terrorism or other criminality in a reasonable person;

- (U//FOUO) Operation of a video-equipped UAS near sensitive locations or ongoing law enforcement operations in a manner that would arouse suspicion of terrorism or other criminality in a reasonable person;

- (U//FOUO) Attempts to modify a UAS with explosives or chemical agents, or with explosives- or chemical-delivery mechanisms, including sprayers or foggers;

- (U//FOUO) Suspicious attempts to interview, interface with, or interact with employees or individuals knowledgeable about key personnel, critical infrastructure, or key resource facilities, networks, or systems with no alternate reasonable explanation;

- (U//FOUO) Individuals who are unable or unwilling to answer basic questions on the use, application, safety, or handling of UASs or who are evasive or vague about their intended use for the system; and

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- (U//FOUO) Theft or unusual or unauthorized acquisition of containers capable of holding lethal chemical agents or explosive materials.

(U//FOUO) Possible indicators of cyber or cybersecurity threat activity include:

- (U//FOUO) Online forum or social media discussions among cyber actors indicating disruptive or damaging cyber attacks targeting 59th Presidential Inauguration-related networks, systems, or websites;

- (U//FOUO) Criminal hacker groups publicly encouraging cyber attacks against the 59th Presidential Inauguration prior to the event; and

- (U//FOUO) Threats that use a combination of computer intrusion, social engineering, e-mail spoofing, or malware.

(U//FOUO) Please report suspicious activities associated with any of the indicators listed above to the contact information at the end of this document.

(U) Report Suspicious Activity
(U) The FBI encourages recipients of this document to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to the local FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). The FBI's Washington Field Office can be reached at 202-278-2000 or by e-mail at WFOFOUO.fbi.gov.

(U) Tracked by: HSEC-1.1, HSEC-1.2, HSEC-1.3, HSEC-HSEC-1.5, HSEC-7.1, HSEC-7.2, HSEC-7.3, HSEC-7.5, HSEC-8.1, HSEC-8.2, HSEC-8.3, HSEC-8.5, HSEC-8.6.2.19, HSEC-8.8

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CLASSIFICATION:

Homeland Security

Office of Intelligence and Analysis

Customer Feedback Form

Product Title:

All survey responses are completely anonymous. No personally identifiable information is captured unless you voluntarily offer personal or contact information in any of the comment fields. Additionally, your responses are combined with those of many others and summarized in a report to further protect your anonymity.

1. Please select partner type: and function:

2. What is the highest level of intelligence information that you receive?

3. Please complete the following sentence: "I focus most of my time on:"

4. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following:

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A
Product's overall usefulness						
Product's relevance to your mission						
Product's timeliness						
Product's responsiveness to your intelligence needs						

5. How do you plan to use this product in support of your mission? *(Check all that apply.)*

- Drive planning and preparedness efforts, training, and/or emergency response operations
- Observe, identify, and/or disrupt threats
- Share with partners
- Allocate resources (e.g. equipment and personnel)
- Reprioritize organizational focus
- Author or adjust policies and guidelines
- Initiate a law enforcement investigation
- Intiate your own regional-specific analysis
- Intiate your own topic-specific analysis
- Develop long-term homeland security strategies
- Do not plan to use
- Other:

6. To further understand your response to question #5, please provide specific details about situations in which you might use this product.

7. What did this product *not* address that you anticipated it would?

8. To what extent do you agree with the following two statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disgree	N/A
This product will enable me to make better decisions regarding this topic.						
This product provided me with intelligence information I did not find elsewhere.						

9. How did you obtain this product?

10. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up conversation about your feedback?

To help us understand more about your organization so we can better tailor future products, please provide:

Name: Position:

Organization: State:

Contact Number: Email:

Submit Feedback

Privacy Act Statement

CLASSIFICATION:

Product Serial Number: REV: 01 August 2017

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Video shows fatal shooting of Ashli Babbitt in the Capitol

By **Jon Swaine**, **Dalton Bennett**, **Joyce Sohyun Lee** and **Meg Kelly**

Jan. 8, 2021 at 12:57 p.m. EST

Two previously unreported video clips obtained by The Washington Post shed new light on the fatal shooting by police of Trump supporter and Air Force veteran Ashli Babbitt as she and other rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Babbitt and others were attempting to breach a barricaded door inside the Capitol building on Wednesday afternoon, angrily demanding that three U.S. Capitol Police officers who were guarding the door step aside, one of the clips shows. The officers moved away as colleagues in tactical gear arrived behind the rioters, according to the clip and other video posted online.

Roughly 35 seconds after the officers moved away, as she climbed up toward a broken section of the unguarded door, Babbitt was shot by an officer on the other side.

Babbitt, a 35-year-old California native, and more than a dozen others appeared to be trying to get into the Speaker's Lobby, a hallway that would have given them access to the House of Representatives chamber, according to a Post analysis of video footage and plans of the Capitol.

A second clip, recorded approximately three minutes before the shooting, appears to show lawmakers and officials in the Speaker's Lobby, just yards from Babbitt and others trying to get through. Rep. James P. McGovern (D-Mass.), the chairman of the House Rules Committee, was one of those present, a spokesperson confirmed.

As the lawmakers and officials were being evacuated, one rioter wearing a fur-lined hat repeatedly punched the doorway's glass panels immediately behind the officers, creating extensive damage, the video footage shows. The rioter tried to get around one officer, identified by a patch on his jacket as K. Yetter, while several rioters yelled at the police to let them through.

"We don't want to hurt no one, we just want to go inside," one told them.

Another one yelled, "F--- the blue!"

The Capitol Police did not respond to requests for comment. Two of the officers could not be identified, and attempts to reach Yetter were unsuccessful.

Babbitt, who was wearing a Trump flag as a cape, can be seen in the video footage acting in an agitated manner and remonstrating with officers. Her remarks to the police are not clearly audible.

At one point John Sullivan, a controversial self-described liberal activist who shoots video at a range of protests and who filmed the footage on Wednesday, is heard warning an officer that additional rioters may be on their way. "We

want you to go home," he said, according to the video. "I'm recording. And there's so many people. They're gonna to push their way up here. Bro, I've seen people out there get hurt. I don't want to see you get hurt."

Sullivan provided the video to the The Post.

Another man, wearing a red Trump hat, told the officers, "We backed you guys in the summer. When the whole country hated you, we had your back."

At this point, one officer guarding the door said to the others, "They're ready to roll," and gestured to them to come with him, the video shows. The officers stepped away from the door together and moved to an adjacent wall.

With the door clear of law enforcement, some of the rioters renewed their efforts to break through. One used a helmet, and another tried with a flagpole.

About 20 seconds after the officers stepped aside, a loud scream is heard on the footage. One man shouted three times that an officer on the other side of the door had a gun. An officer with a gun can be seen at the edge of the video's frame. The warning was repeated by another man, but other rioters continued trying to smash through the doorway.

Around this time, the departing officers were met by colleagues wearing helmets and armed with rifles, who had arrived from a stairwell behind Babbitt and the rioters, according to other video posted to social media. These officers began evacuating the officers who had guarded the door down the stairs.

With help from someone who hoisted her up, Babbitt began to step through a portion of the door where the glass had been broken out. An officer on the other side, who was wearing a suit and a surgical mask, immediately shot Babbitt in the neck. She fell to the floor.

Moments later, the officers armed with rifles and the officers who had guarded the door reemerged from the staircase behind where Babbitt had fallen, according to other video posted online. Some officers tended to Babbitt while others yelled at rioters to clear the area so she could receive treatment.

Timothy McEntee, Babbitt's ex-husband, told The Post that his ex-wife owned a pool-cleaning business. "She's a small business owner in California and felt (much like others) that she was being wronged," McEntee wrote in a text message.

The Capitol Police announced Thursday that the officer who shot Babbitt had been placed on administrative leave as the department and D.C. police investigate.

Justin Jouvenal, Carol D. Leonnig, Atthar Mirza, Aaron Steckelberg and Lauren Tierney contributed reporting.

Updated January 13, 2021

Complete coverage: Pro-Trump mob storms Capitol building

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Security

Security

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What happened on Jan. 6

Six hours of paralysis: Inside Trump's failure to act after a mob stormed the Capitol

Analysis: What Trump said before his supporters stormed the Capitol, annotated

Inside the Capitol: How barricaded lawmakers and aides sounded urgent pleas for help as police lost control



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Yes, Congress May Impeach and Remove President Trump for Inciting Lawless Behavior at the Capitol

reason.com/volokh/2021/01/08/yes-congress-may-impeach-and-remove-president-trump-for-inciting-lawless-behavior-at-the-capitol/

January 8, 2021



I would like to offer a brief response to my co-blogger Joshua Blackman and Seth Tillman's post arguing that Congress may not impeach and remove President Trump on the grounds of incitement for his remarks on January 6 preceding and during the electoral count in Congress. I think this claim is wrong both as a matter of existing law and original constitutional meaning.

As I understand their argument, it is that if Trump's speech does not constitute incitement for First Amendment purposes, then Congress cannot impeach President Trump on grounds of incitement. I believe this argument is wrong, unless reduced to an irrelevant semantic claim.

Before explaining my reasons, let me be clear that I understand us to be talking about what it would be legitimate for Congress to do under the Constitution. In other words, could a member of Congress vote to impeach or convict the President on these grounds consistent with their constitutional oath. I add this qualification because I do not understand Blackman and Tillman to be making any claim that an impeachment and conviction on this basis would be legally invalid or challengeable in Court. After all, Congress, and not the courts, is the ultimate judge of what constitutes an impeachable offense.

To start, I will assume, for the sake of argument, that nothing President Trump said this week would constitute actual incitement under existing First Amendment doctrine. That is, however awful and unpresidential his comments may have been, I will accept for the sake of argument that they did not pose a sufficient risk of inducing imminent lawless action of the sort necessary to sacrifice First Amendment protection. Would that mean he could not be impeached for those remarks? Not at all.

As others have explained at length (including my co-blogger Keith Whittington and Timothy Sandefur), a president may be impeached for lawful actions. The phrase "High Crimes and Misdemeanors" was never understood to be limited to actual crimes, whether at common law or as defined by the U.S. Code (the latter of which scarcely existed at the time). It has always been understood to include abuses of power and other actions that are wrongful when committed by a public official, even if legal. See, for instance, Alexander Hamilton's comments in *Federalist* 65. So whether or not Trump's comments would be criminal under federal law is irrelevant to the question of whether or not they could constitute an impeachable offense.

But what about the First Amendment? Does it matter if we assume that Trump's speech would be protected? Not at all.

The fact that speech may be protected when uttered by a private citizen does not mean it is immune from government sanction. To see this point, just think about how the First Amendment applies to public employees. The Amendment does not generally protect speech uttered in the course of one's employment, and *even if* a government employee engages in protected speech in a private capacity, off the job, on a matter of public concern, it may still be sanctioned if the government has interests that sufficiently outweigh the employee's interest in speaking freely. So, for instance, if a police officer engages in otherwise protected speech off-the-job, it could still result in that officer being fired if the speech might compromise the ability of the officer to perform his or her job, or call the officer's fitness into question. So, while racist speech may be protected, police departments can still discipline officers for off-duty racist speech.

The point here is that the First Amendment does not protect the speech of government officials and employees the same way that it protects private speech, and the fact that the government cannot criminalize certain speech does not mean that the government may not sanction government officers or employees for otherwise protected speech. So were Congress to conclude that the President's remarks constituted an abuse of power, a dereliction of his responsibilities, or a betrayal of his constitutional oath, it would not matter that the same remarks, if uttered by a private citizen would be protected by the First Amendment.

But, Blackman and Tillman might respond, Congress can impeach the President, but just not for *incitement*. The claim here seems to be that if Congress is going to use incitement as a basis for impeachment, it can only do so if the speech in question satisfies the definition of incitement under existing First Amendment law. If this means Congress should just use

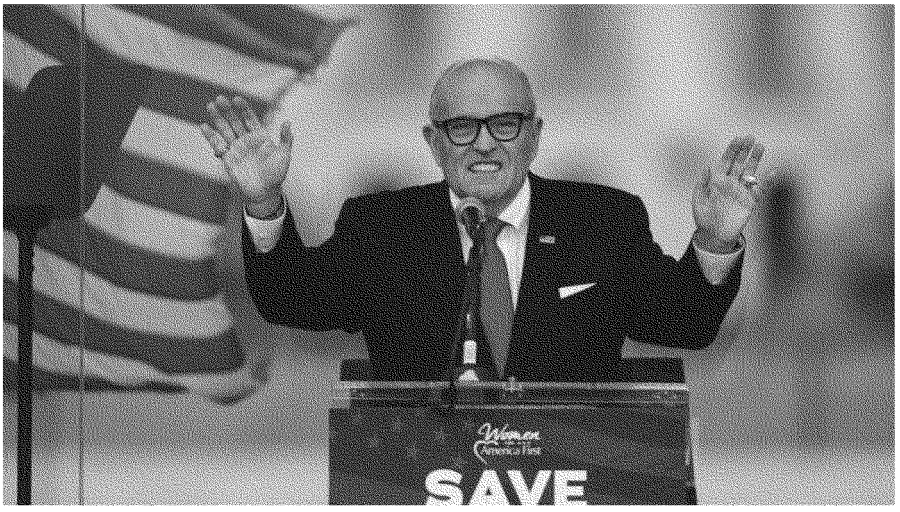
another word, it's a semantic claim of no real relevance, because Congress would still be impeaching Trump over the same remarks in question. But I don't think even this semantic point has much force. Just as "High Crimes and Misdemeanors" need not be actual crimes or misdemeanors, "Incitement" as an impeachable offense need not have the same definition as "incitement" for the purposes of criminal law or the First Amendment. There is nothing in the Constitution or its history that would impose such a constraint.

And even if one thought that speech short-of-legal incitement was not impeachable, why would the Supreme Court's 20th century understanding of incitement be controlling? Why would we not consider the understanding of incitement to riot at the founding? There's a serious argument, at least where the threat of riot was concerned, that the founding era understanding accepted a broader definition of incitement than current Court doctrine. And let's not forget that we have seen public officials impeachment for speech that would be protected today, and one of the articles of impeachment brought against Andrew Johnson concerned his irresponsible rhetorical excesses.

The bottom line, as I see it, is that the First Amendment imposes no constraint on Congress's ability to impeach and remove President Trump not to disqualify him from holding future office. I agree with Michael McConnell that "there is no doubt that inciting a crowd to disrupt the certification of election results is an impeachable offense." If members of Congress concur that Trump's remarks this week constitute and evince the sort of behavior that poses an unacceptable threat to our institutions and a betrayal of his constitutional oath, they should act accordingly and swiftly. In doing so, they would be acting in accordance with their constitutional oath, not violating it.

Giuliani says he's working on Trump's impeachment defense, would argue voter fraud claims

abcnews.go.com/US/giuliani-working-trumps-impeachment-defense-argue-voter-fraud/story



"If you can prove that it's true... they are no longer fighting words," he said.

6:21

US Capitol riots: Tracking the insurrection

On Jan. 6, rioters coming from a pro-Trump rally broke into the U.S. Capitol, resulting in deaths, injuries, arrests and vandalism.

Jim Bourg/Reuters, FILE
President Donald Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani tells ABC News he's working as part of the president's defense team in his upcoming second impeachment trial -- and that he's prepared to argue that the president's claims of widespread voter fraud did not constitute incitement to violence because the widely-debunked claims are true.

"I'm involved right now ... that's what I'm working on," Giuliani told ABC News Chief White House Correspondent Jonathan Karl.

A few hours later, Giuliani -- who led the president's efforts to overturn the 2020 election results -- was spotted at the White House.

Giuliani's involvement in Trump's impeachment defense comes as many of the lawyers involved in the president's first impeachment, including White House counsel Pat Cipollone and his deputies and outside lawyers Jay Sekulow and Jane and Marty Raskin, do not plan to return for the second trial.

MORE: Longtime Trump advisers connected to groups behind rally that led to Capitol attack
Along with Trump, Giuliani spoke at the Jan. 6 rally ahead of the Capitol attack, where he urged the crowd to engage in "trial by combat." Five people, including a Capitol Police officer, died when pro-Trump supporters marched to the Capitol following the rally and forced their way into the building in an effort to keep members of Congress from certifying the presidential election for president-elect Joe Biden.

Giuliani said there are "different opinions" regarding how the president should approach his second impeachment.

The former New York City mayor said that in his defense of the president, he would introduce allegations of widespread voter fraud that have been raised -- and rejected -- in dozens of courtrooms across the country.

"They basically claimed that anytime [Trump] says voter fraud, voter fraud -- or I do, or anybody else -- we're inciting to violence; that those words are fighting words because it's totally untrue," he said. "Well, if you can prove that it's true, or at least true enough so it's a legitimate viewpoint, then they are no longer fighting words."

Jim Bourg/Reuters, FILE
PHOTO: President Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani speaks as Trump supporters gather by the White House ahead of the certification of the results of the 2020 U.S. presidential election in Washington, Jan. 6, 2021.

He also said that he personally believed Trump should move to dismiss the trial outright.

"If they decide to bring it to a trial, he should move to dismiss the impeachment as entirely illegal. That it was the only impeachment ever done in what, two days, three days," Giuliani told ABC News. "We would say to the court, 'You are now permitting in the future, basically in two days, the Congress can just impeach on anything they want to."

In an historic move last week, the House of Representatives voted to impeach Trump, with all Democrats along with 10 Republican members voting to charge the president with inciting supporters to storm the U.S. Capitol.

"The president of the United States incited this insurrection, this armed rebellion, against our common country. He must go," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said on the House floor. "He is a clear and present danger to the nation that we all love."

Rep. Liz Cheney, the No. 3 Republican in House leadership, was among the 10 Republicans who voted to charge the president. Cheney issued a scathing statement condemning the president's actions ahead of the vote, writing, "The president of the United States summoned this mob, assembled the mob, and lit the flame of this attack. Everything that followed was his doing. None of this would have happened without the president."

Giuliani dismissed the validity of the single article of impeachment accusing Trump of inciting violence against the government on the grounds that the president's rally speech did not incite the riot because there was a delay between the speech and the attack.

"Basically, if [incitement] is going to happen, it's got to happen right away," he said. "You'd have to have people running out, you'd have to have people running out of that frozen speech, right up to the Capitol. And that's basically, incitement," Giuliani said.

MORE: 6 questions about Trump's 2nd impeachment trial answered, much still unknown
If the effort to dismiss the impeachment article fails, which is likely, Giuliani said he wouldn't rule out the president testifying. Trump's lawyers were opposed to him testifying during his first impeachment trial, but Giuliani says this situation is different and the impeachment defense is "much more straightforward."

"You always make that decision at the last minute," Giuliani said. "As a lawyer, I wouldn't be as strongly opposed to his testifying as I was then."

Sources close to the president had recently told ABC News that Trump had been increasingly irritated with Giuliani and had not been taking his calls, but he now appears still very much involved in the discussions about how to handle the impeachment trial.

One of the big remaining questions about Trump's final days in office is what pardons he may issue and if he will attempt to pardon himself, something Trump has told advisers he would like to do even though no president has ever done so. White House Counsel Pat Cipollone has advised Trump against a self-pardon, in part because he does not think such a pardon would hold up in court, according to sources familiar with the conversations.

MORE: Pelosi declines to say when she will send impeachment article to Senate
Giuliani declined to say what advice he has given the president about pardoning himself, but he told ABC News that his personal opinion is that it's perfectly justified.

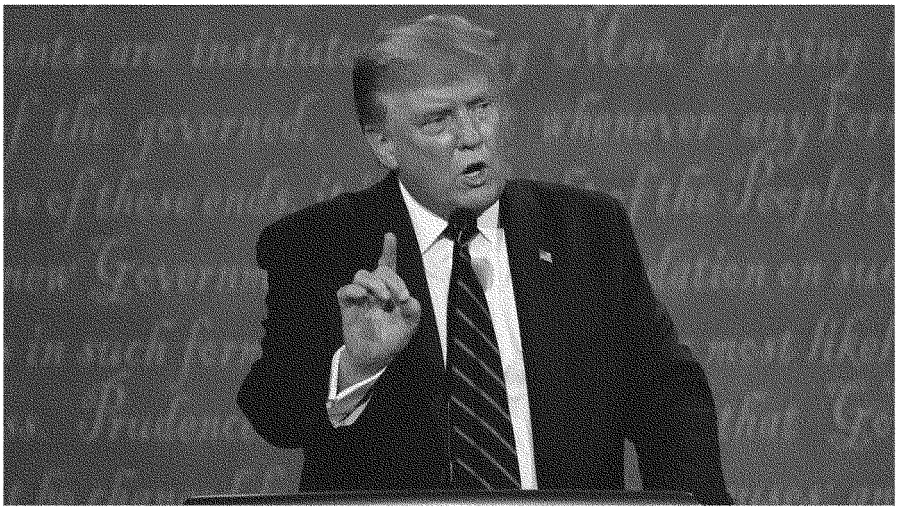
"I think any lawyer would have to tell you there's nothing in the Constitution that permits it. There's nothing in the Constitution that prohibits it. The plain language of the Constitution doesn't limit who we can pardon," Giuliani said. "Do I think there's justification for it because of the atmosphere we are in? Practical justification? Absolutely."

Giuliani dismissed concerns of some Trump advisers that a self-pardon would make Trump more vulnerable to future civil lawsuits because it would be seen as an admission of guilt.

"I mean his legal life's gonna be complicated no matter what," Giuliani told ABC News. "Maybe because I'm more of a criminal lawyer than a civil lawyer, I'd much rather have my civil life complicated than my criminal life."

Georgia election official says Trump is 'flat out, 100 percent, four square wrong' about consent decree

11alive.com/article/news/politics/elections/georgia-consent-decree-election-official-says-trump-wrong/85-db462666-11d4-46c1-97e4-18d9bf79e365



Elections

Gabriel Sterling in the Secretary of State's Office said the consent decree that's been a sticking point of the president's did not change the law.



ATLANTA — The "consent decree" in Georgia is something you may have noticed the president tweeting about lately, in his effort to cast the state's election as illegitimate.

It's a bit of a dense legal matter, and easy to get confused quick if you try to break it down, but on Tuesday an official in the Georgia Secretary of State's Office explained why he thinks the president is "flat out, 100 percent, four square wrong" in his conception of the decree.

First, a little about the decree: It was an agreement struck earlier this year between Sec. of State Brad Raffensperger and a grouping of Democratic organizations to settle a lawsuit by the Democrats against Georgia over, generally, how signature matching is done.

RELATED: Signature matching can't be done during Georgia's audit | Here's why

It is at the heart of a lawsuit by a prominent Atlanta attorney, L. Lin Wood, against Raffensperger in an attempt to stop him from certifying the state's election results. (You can see the suit itself here, and the decree starting on page 43 of that link.)

The suit argues that, with the agreement, Sec. Raffensperger unilaterally and illegally changed Georgia law. Gabriel Sterling, the Secretary of State's voting systems implementation manager, basically laughed that argument off on Tuesday.

"The consent decree - he's just wrong, he's just flat out, 100 percent four square wrong, " Sterling said. "The consent decree literally – all we did was send out an 'official election bulletin,' telling people, 'hey follow our rules and how we already do signature match.'"

He argued the only substantive change in policy - a policy subject to the discretion of the Secretary of State's Office - was how people should be given notice if their ballot was rejected.

It was changed to give them notice within 24 hours, if that ballot was rejected within 11 days of the election.

RELATED: More than 2,700 uncounted votes discovered in Fayette County on a memory card

The suit brought by Wood is arguing the consent decree amounted to a unconstitutional change of election law, which the U.S. Constitution delegates authority over to state legislatures - in Georgia, the General Assembly.

Sterling rejected that.

"It's just wrong, it's confusing to people, and people wanna believe it because the president's saying it, but this consent decree literally didn't do anything and change the law with how we do signature match," he said.

The Secretary of State's Office has argued it made signature matching even stronger, by adding it as a requirement at the ballot request stage.

"On that one he's just wrong, and it's just confusing to people," Sterling said. "I wish they would understand what the consent decree action did, and what our law actually says, and the practices that our office actually does."

He also noted how allies of the president have also confused the matter by claiming a 3% figure for ballot rejections in 2018, and noting that it was much lower this year.

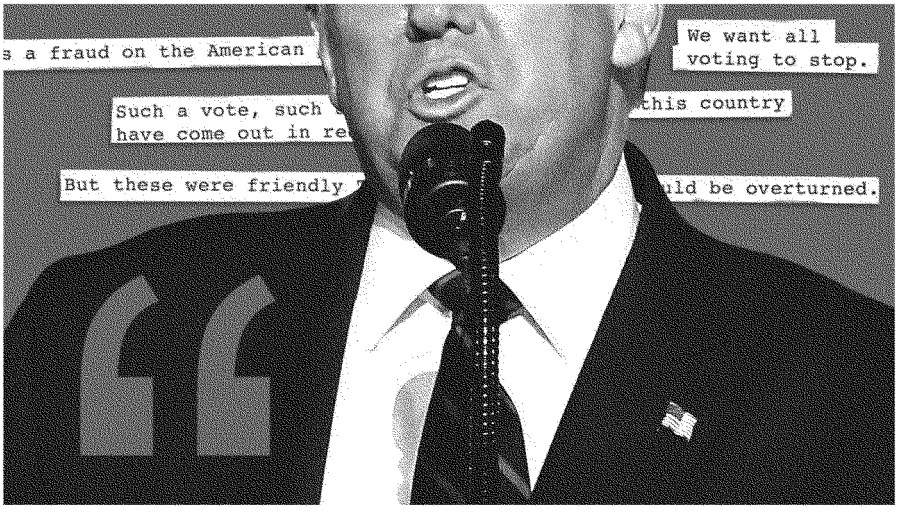
That, Sterling said, was comparing apples and oranges - the 3% figure was the total number of rejections ("the vast majority of that 3% is the ballots that show up late," he said) versus the number specifically rejected for a signature issue.

The percentage of ballots rejected for signature issues in 2020 has been reported by the Secretary of State's Office at 0.15%.

In 2018, Sterling said, it was also 0.15%.

Episode 1: A premeditated lie lit the fire

axios.com/trump-election-premeditated-lie-ebaf4a1f-46bf-4c37-ba0d-3ed5536ef537.html



7 hours ago - Politics & Policy

Jonathan Swan, Zachary Basu

Photo illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios. Photo: Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

Beginning on election night 2020 and continuing through his final days in office, Donald Trump unraveled and dragged America with him, to the point that his followers sacked the U.S. Capitol with two weeks left in his term. Axios takes you inside the collapse of a president with a special series.

Episode 1: *Trump's refusal to believe the election results was premeditated. He had heard about the "red mirage" — the likelihood that early vote counts would tip more Republican than the final tallies — and he decided to exploit it.*

"Jared, you call the Murdochs! Jason, you call Sammon and Hemmer!"

President Trump was almost shouting. He directed his son-in-law and his senior strategist from his private quarters at the White House late on election night. He barked out the names of top Fox News executives and talent he expected to answer to him.

"And anyone else — anyone else who will take the call," he said. "Tell these guys they got to change it, they got it wrong. It's way too early. Not even CNN is calling it."

As the clock ticked over into the first minutes of Nov. 4, Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani ranted to top campaign aides: "There's no way he lost; this thing must have been stolen. Just say we won Michigan! Just say we won Georgia! Just say we won the election! He needs to go out and claim victory." Trump's campaign manager Bill Stepien later told associates: "That was fucking crazy."

For weeks, Trump had been laying the groundwork to declare victory on election night — even if he lost. But the real-time results, punctuated by Fox's shocking call, upended his plans and began his unraveling.

Trump had planned for Americans to go to bed on Nov. 3 celebrating — or resigned to — his re-election. The maps they saw on TV should be bathed in red. But at 11:20 p.m. that vision fell apart, as the nation's leading news channel among conservatives became the first outlet to call Arizona for Joe Biden. Inside the White House, Trump's inner circle erupted in horror.

Over the next two months, Trump took the nation down with him as he descended into denial, despair and a reckless revenge streak that fueled a deadly siege on the U.S. Capitol by his backers seeking to overturn the election. This triggered a constitutional crisis and a bipartisan push to impeach Trump on his way out the door, to try to cast him out of American politics for good.

But in four years, Trump had remade the Republican Party in his own image, inspiring and activating tens of millions of Americans who weren't abandoning him anytime soon. He'd once bragged he could shoot another person on Fifth Avenue and not lose his voters. In reality, many of them had eagerly lined up to commit violence on his behalf.

As Trump prepared for Election Day, he was focused on the so-called red mirage. This was the idea that early vote counts would look better for Republicans than the final tallies because Democrats feared COVID-19 more and would disproportionately cast absentee votes

that would take longer to count. Trump intended to exploit this — to weaponize it for his vast base of followers.

His preparations were deliberate, strategic and deeply cynical. Trump wanted Americans to believe a falsehood that there were two elections — a legitimate election composed of in-person voting, and a separate, fraudulent election involving bogus mail-in ballots for Democrats.

In the initial hours after returns closed, it looked like his plan could work. Trump was on track for easy wins in Florida and Ohio, and held huge — though deceptive — early leads in Pennsylvania and Michigan.

But as Bill Hemmer narrated a live "what if" scenario on his election telestrator from Studio F of Fox's gargantuan Manhattan headquarters, the anchor sounded confused. "What is this happening here? Why is Arizona blue?" he asked on camera, prodding the image of the state on the touch screen, unable to flip its color. "Did we just call it? Did we make a call in Arizona?" Because of a minor communication breakdown, Hemmer's screen had turned Arizona blue before he or the other anchors, Bret Baier and Martha MacCallum, found out that Fox's Decision Desk had called it.

Trump was steaming and he wanted to see his top aides immediately. His son-in-law Jared Kushner, chief of staff Mark Meadows, campaign manager Stepien, senior strategist Jason Miller, and data cruncher Matt Oczkowski took the elevator up to the third floor of the residence at the White House. They met Trump and the first lady halfway between his bedroom and the living room at the end of the hall. Trump peppered them with questions. What happened? What the hell is going on at Fox?

Oczkowski told Trump that based on the campaign's modeling he thought Fox was wrong and "we're going to narrowly win" by maybe 10,000 votes or less, "razor close." But the reality was, hundreds of thousands of votes were outstanding in Maricopa County and the picture was too cloudy to be sure. Then Trump told Kushner to call the Murdochs.

The team had been cautiously optimistic that they were watching a repeat of Trump's poll-defying 2016 victory. In the West Wing, mid-level staffers congregated in the hallways buzzing with nervous excitement and anticipation. At the residence about 200 guests — donors, Cabinet secretaries, White House physician Sean Conley, TV boosters Diamond and Silk, and other VIPs — gathered for the official election night party. They munched on beef sliders. Most did not wear masks.

Giuliani was stationed at a table amid the party, laptop open, watching the results come in, as if he were Command Central. His son, White House official Andrew Giuliani, sat at his right. Trump's tight inner circle — children Don Jr., Eric, Ivanka, plus his long-time adviser Hope Hicks, White House deputy chief of staff Dan Scavino and a few others — gathered separately

in the Old Family Dining Room to watch the returns on TV. Trump's core campaign team monitored precinct-level results from down in the Map Room on the ground floor, the same room where FDR had once tracked fighting during World War II.

Trump had spent a bellicose summer and early autumn railing against mail-in ballots. After a toxic Sept. 29 election debate with Biden, Trump's internal poll numbers nose-dived. He started choreographing election night in earnest during the second week of October, as he recovered from COVID-19.

His former chief of staff Reince Priebus told a friend he was stunned when Trump called him around that time and acted out his script, including walking up to a podium and prematurely declaring victory on election night if it looked like he was ahead.

White House senior policy adviser Stephen Miller's speechwriting team had prepared three skeleton speeches for election night for all the possible scenarios: a clear victory, a clear loss, and an indeterminate result. But the speechwriters knew that if Trump was facing anything other than a resounding victory, the words would be his alone. This president would never admit defeat or urge patience.

The top officials tried to force Fox to retract its call. Kushner called Rupert Murdoch, who said he would see what was going on. Hicks, a former Fox executive, texted current Fox executive and ex-White House staffer Raj Shah. Hicks also gave Fox News president Jay Wallace's phone number to top Trump campaign officials. The Trump campaign's senior-most officials aggressively texted anchors MacCallum and Baier. Throughout the night, a number of Fox commentators friendly to Trump — including Tucker Carlson — questioned the Arizona call on the air. But the call stood.

Making the situation even more awkward, several high-profile Fox News personalities, including "Judge" Jeanine Pirro, were at the White House while their own network spoiled what was supposed to be a victory party.

It was shortly after 1 a.m. on Nov. 4 when Trump finally came down from his living quarters to the main corridor on the second floor of his private residence. His inner circle met him halfway. This was the first time most of them had seen the president that night. About a dozen aides and relatives huddled around Trump as he dictated an improvised speech. Stephen Miller sat on a couch furiously typing the president's stream-of-consciousness thoughts. Aides rushed to print out screenshots of cable news graphics showing Trump's illusory early leads in the key Midwest states. By 2 a.m., Trump wanted to know why he couldn't just say he had won and be done with it.

The speechwriters sent a draft to Trump's longtime teleprompter operator, stationed at his laptop in a small room adjoining the East Room. The draft did not include the words that became the most infamous line of his speech: "Frankly, we did win this election."

At 2:20 a.m., maskless aides and supporters in the East Room held up cellphones to record Trump, the first lady, Vice President Mike Pence and his wife walking out to waiting cameras as "Hail to the Chief" played. Dozens of American flags lined the backdrop behind them.

Trump declared victory — and announced that Democrats were perpetrating a giant fraud on the American people.

Both claims were lies.

About this series: *Our reporting is based on multiple interviews with current and former White House, campaign, government and congressional officials as well as direct eyewitnesses and people close to the president. Sources have been granted anonymity to share sensitive observations or details they would not be formally authorized to disclose. President Trump and other officials to whom quotes and actions have been attributed by others were provided the opportunity to confirm, deny or respond to reporting elements prior to publication.*

"Off the rails" is reported by White House reporter Jonathan Swan with reporting and research assistance by Zach Basu. It was edited by Margaret Talev and Mike Allen. Illustrations by Sarah Grillo, Aida Amer and Eniola Odetunde. Our podcast on the series is called "How it happened: Trump's last stand."

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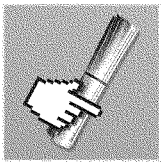

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Off the Rails

Episode 3: Descent into madness ... Trump: "Sometimes you need a little crazy"

Jonathan Swan, Zachary Basu

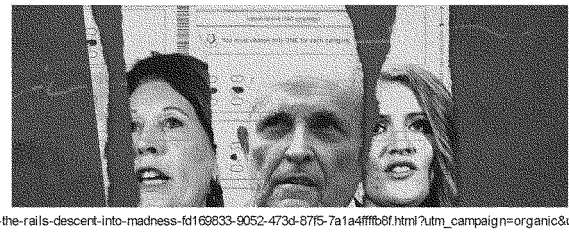

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Photo illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios. Photos: Tom Williams/CQ-Roll Call, Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

Beginning on election night 2020 and continuing through his final days in office, Donald Trump unraveled and dragged America with him, to the point that his followers sacked the U.S. Capitol with two weeks left in his term. This Axios series takes you inside the collapse of a president.

Episode 3: The conspiracy goes too far. Trump's outside lawyers plot to seize voting machines and spin theories about communists, spies and computer software.

President Trump was sitting in the Oval Office one day in late November when a call came in from lawyer Sidney Powell. "Ugh, Sidney," he told the staff in the room before he picked up. "She's getting a little crazy, isn't she? She's really gotta tone it down. No one believes this stuff. It's just too much."

He put the call on speakerphone for the benefit of his audience. Powell was raving about a national security crisis involving the Iranians flipping votes in battleground states. Trump pressed mute and laughed mockingly.

"So what are we gonna do about it, Sidney?" Trump would say every few seconds, whipping Powell more and more into a frenzy. He was having fun with it. "She really is crazy, huh?" he said, again with his finger on the mute button.

It was clear that Trump recognized how unhinged his

grand lie that the election could be overturned.

They were selling Trump a seductive but delusional vision: a clear and achievable path to victory. The only catch: He'd have to stop listening to his government and campaign staffs, to cross the Rubicon and view them as liars, quitters and traitors.

Trump's new gang of advisers shared some common traits. They were sycophants who craved an audience with the president. They were hardcore conspiracy theorists. The other striking commonality within this crew was that all of them had, at one point in their lives, done impressive, professional, mainstream work.

Rudy Giuliani once was "America's Mayor," hailed for his handling of 9/11. Powell was a successful attorney who defended Enron. Michael Flynn was a decorated three-star general whom Obama fired and then Trump brought back as his national security adviser, before firing him and ultimately pardoning him. Lin Wood was a nationally known defamation lawyer. Patrick Byrne made a small fortune launching the internet retailer Overstock.com.

One exception was Jenna Ellis. She had a thin legal resume, and had in the 2016 campaign season used adjectives like "idiot," "boorish," "arrogant," "bully," and "disgusting" to characterize Trump and his behavior.

But during Trump's presidency, she pushed her way into his inner circle, powered by levels of televised obsequiousness remarkable even for Trumpworld.

the president. But Trump promoted Powell as part of his team, and even though he had privately admitted to aides that he thought she was "crazy," he still wanted to hear what she had to say.

"**Sometimes you need a little crazy,**" Trump told one official.

While Trump's campaign team — experienced attorneys such as Justin Clark and Matt Morgan — were scrutinizing issues such as signature verification and access to room monitoring for vote counting, Powell was appealing to Trump's personal mantra to "Think Big!"

She presented the president with a sweeping, multinational conspiracy of foreign interference at a scale never seen before in American history. The fact that she had no evidence that could hold up in court was a minor detail.

Powell and Flynn told Trump he couldn't trust his team. That appealed to a paranoid mentality that always lurked beneath his surface: *The FBI was corrupt. His CIA was working against him, and his intelligence community was, too. Why else weren't they showing him the evidence that China, Venezuela, Iran and various other communists had stolen his election win?*

To help him bypass these obstacles, they'd need Trump to give them top-level security clearances so they could get to the bottom of the "stolen" election. Trump liked this idea. Why not make Powell a special

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Trump's professional staff had learned over time that they had to pick their moments to fight back. On the question of Powell, chief of staff Mark Meadows and White House counsel Pat Cipollone were of one mind: No way was she getting a top secret clearance.

Powell and Flynn sent Trump advisers documents they said contained the evidence of this far-reaching conspiracy. To the White House staff, it was gibberish — the rantings of a QAnon devotee. But these documents — perhaps the most deranged materials to reach a modern U.S. president — found their way to the West Wing.

According to documents obtained by Axios, Powell and her crew advised Trump that a foreign conspiracy to steal the election involved a coordinated cyberwarfare attack from China, Russia, Iran, Iraq and North Korea.

In arguments in front of Trump in the Oval Office, White House officials pushed back aggressively.

What Powell was claiming to have uncovered would have been the greatest foreign attack in American history. Yet the U.S. intelligence community had seen no evidence of it.

But Powell had an answer for that too: The reason Trump hadn't heard about this from his intelligence officials was because they were actively subverting him and hiding crucial information from him.

— dated back to at least the summer.

On July 1, 2020, Trump met with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Sen. Todd Young of Indiana and top political aides in the Oval Office for an update on Senate races. Trump was holding a printed slide deck showing the latest key data points, like polling and cash on hand, for the closely watched Colorado Senate race between Republican Cory Gardner and Democrat John Hickenlooper.

Trump looked at the deck and immediately said, "How about that primary last night?"

QAnon-enthusiast Lauren Boebert had won the Republican primary for Colorado's 3rd Congressional District. Consensus in the room was that Boebert's victory was a stunner. The president then addressed McConnell. "You know she's a believer in that QAnon," he said. "Are you familiar with that, Mitch?" McConnell sat there stone-faced. He didn't move a muscle.

"You know, people say they're into all kinds of bad things and say all kinds of terrible things about them," Trump added. "But, you know, my understanding is they basically are just people who want good government."

The room fell silent. Nobody knew how to respond.

Then all of a sudden Meadows burst out laughing. "I have heard them described a lot of ways, but never quite like that," he said. The meeting participants broke down laughing. "In terror, quite candidly," said a source

conspiracy theorists and sycophants. She offered the comforting deceptions that Trump was craving in his desperate post-election days and that the people on his team who had actual experience in election law refused to serve him.

In the false and baseless theory she crafted, America's enemies had used two CIA programs — a foreign surveillance program called the "Hammer" and a cyberwarfare weapon called "Scorecard" — to steal U.S. elections.

Her evidence was based on claims from a California computer programmer with a long track record of hawking fantastic-sounding technology. Powell and Flynn claimed that the CIA had been using these programs nefariously since 2009.

Documents her team shared with Trump advisers falsely claimed that top Obama administration intelligence officials John Brennan and Jim Clapper — both enemies of Trump's — had illegally commandeered Hammer to advance Obama's supposed ambition of turning America into a communist client state. They further claimed that Brennan and Clapper had taken the program's source code with them when they left office. China had now mysteriously acquired Hammer, Powell argued.

They described this as an act of war in an Oval Office appearance on Dec. 18. No response should be considered too bold, they said. Trump needed to use the full force of the U.S. government to seize Dominion

of this, raised questions about the state of his mind and his capacity to fulfill his duties.

The evening before that meeting, Giuliani had phoned his old friend, Ken Cuccinelli, second in command at the Department of Homeland Security, asking him whether DHS could seize voting machines. "No," Cuccinelli told Giuliani, politely but firmly. His department did not have that legal authority.

By this point, Trump was mainlining conspiracies. Many of his longest-serving advisers had all but given up trying to reason with him.

His son-in-law, Jared Kushner, billed once by Newsweek as the most influential presidential relative since Bobby Kennedy, receded from the discussions when it came to countering the crazies. Once Giuliani took over, Kushner subsided from view, trying to cut last minute deals in the Middle East and burnish his foreign policy legacy. This frustrated some of his colleagues. Serious intervention was required on the domestic front.

Whether Trump himself was still in charge, or had ceded decision-making to the bottom feeders, was at least an open question.

🎧 **Listen to Jonathan Swan** on Axios' new investigative podcast series, called "How it happened: Trump's last stand."

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people close to the president. Sources have been granted anonymity to share sensitive observations or details they would not be authorized to disclose. President Trump and other officials to whom quotes and actions have been attributed by others were provided the opportunity to confirm, deny or respond to reporting elements prior to publication.

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Go deeper

Jonathan Swan, Zachary Basu
12 hours ago - Politics & Policy

Off the Rails

Episode 2: Barbarians at the Oval



Photo illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios. Photo: Jim Watson/AFP/Getty Images

Beginning on election night 2020 and continuing through his final days in office, Donald Trump unraveled and

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sacked the U.S. Capitol with two weeks left in his term. This Axios series takes you inside the collapse of a president.

Episode 2: Trump stops buying what his professional staff are telling him, and increasingly turns to radical voices telling him what he wants to hear. Read episode 1.

President Trump plunked down in an armchair in the White House residence, still dressed from his golf game — navy fleece, black pants, white MAGA cap. It was Saturday, Nov. 7. The networks had just called the election for Joe Biden.

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Jan 16, 2021 - Politics & Policy

Off the Rails

Episode 1: A premeditated lie lit the fire

Photo illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios. Photo: Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

Beginning on election night 2020 and continuing through his final days in office, Donald Trump unraveled and dragged America with him, to the point that his followers sacked the U.S. Capitol with two weeks left in his term. This Axios series takes you inside the collapse of a president.

Episode 1: Trump's refusal to believe the election results

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Republican than the final tallies — and he decided to exploit it.

"**Jared, you call the Murdochs!** Jason, you call Sammon and Hemmer!"

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Scoop: Gina Haspel threatened to resign over plan to install Kash Patel as CIA deputy

CIA Director Gina Haspel. Photo: Win McNamee/Getty Images

CIA Director Gina Haspel threatened to resign in early December after President Trump cooked up a hasty plan to install loyalist Kash Patel, a former aide to Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), as her deputy, according to three senior administration officials with direct

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Why it matters: The revelation stunned national security officials and almost blew up the leadership of the world's most powerful spy agency. Only a series of coincidences — and last minute interventions from Vice President Mike Pence and White House counsel Pat Cipollone — stopped it.

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Off the Rails

Episode 4: Trump turns on Barr



Jonathan Swan



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sacked the U.S. Capitol with two weeks left in his term. Axios takes you inside the collapse of a president with a special series.

Episode 4: Trump torches what is arguably the most consequential relationship in his Cabinet.

Attorney General Bill Barr stood behind a chair in the private dining room next to the Oval Office, looming over Donald Trump. The president sat at the head of the table. It was Dec. 1, nearly a month after the election, and Barr had some sharp advice to get off his chest. The president's theories about a stolen election, Barr told Trump, were "bullshit."

White House counsel Pat Cipollone and a few other aides in the room were shocked Barr had come out and said it — although they knew it was true. For good measure, the attorney general threw in a warning that the new legal team Trump was betting his future on was "clownish."

Trump had angrily dragged Barr in to explain himself after seeing a breaking AP story all over Twitter, with the headline: "Disputing Trump, Barr says no widespread election fraud." But Barr was not backing down. Three weeks later, he would be gone.

The relationship between the president and his attorney general was arguably the most consequential in Trump's Cabinet. And in the six months leading up to this meeting, the relationship between the two men had quietly disintegrated. Nobody was more loyal

most loyal allies, listening increasingly to the conspiracy theorists who echoed his own views and offered an illusion, an alternate reality.

By the late summer of 2020, Trump and Barr were regularly skirmishing over how to handle the rising Black Lives Matter protests sparked by the death of George Floyd while in police custody. As the national movement unfurled, some protests had given way to violence and looting. Trump wanted the U.S. government to crack down hard on the unrest.

The president wanted to invoke the Insurrection Act and send the military into U.S. cities. He wanted troops in the street. Some hardcore outside allies, including Judicial Watch president Tom Fitton, were egging him on. The thankless job of pushing back fell to Barr.

At times, Barr was the heat shield between the president and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley and Defense Secretary Mark Esper, both

of whom strongly objected to Trump's fantasies of U.S. troops descending upon Portland.

The president regularly summoned a group of national security leaders to the Oval Office, and one mid-August meeting was particularly volatile.

From his seat behind the Resolute Desk, an agitated Trump told Barr to go and do *something*, and to do it right away — make an announcement, send in the troops, something. Just go in and resolve it, the

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Barr disagreed. He thought the heat in the protests was gradually easing. He explained law enforcement strategy and his opinion that military intervention would backfire. Federal investigators were already hunting for the ringleaders in the protests.

Besides, Barr asked, what was the endgame for adding the military to the mix? Federal forces could end up stranded in a city like Portland indefinitely.

Trump grew more and more frustrated, but Barr pushed back harder, standing his ground in front of everyone in the room. He was ready, willing and able to be strong, he said. But, he added, we also have to be thoughtful.

What would these soldiers do, Barr pointed out. Just stand around and get yelled at? Trump didn't care. We look weak and this is hurting us, he ranted. Then he slammed his hand on the Resolute Desk.

"No one supports me," Trump yelled. "No one gives me any fucking support."
Trump got up and stormed out of the Oval Office to his private dining room, leaving Barr and the others behind. Barr glanced over at a red-faced White House chief of staff, Mark Meadows, and joked, "Well that went well."

Constant head-butting over how aggressive they should be was a serious irritant in the relationship. Trump wanted televised displays of shock and awe, particularly in Portland and Seattle.

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experience to "Groundhog Day." It was always Groundhog Day trying to explain things to Trump.

Trump was ricocheting between the advice of experienced advisers like Barr and Cipollone and the growing coterie of outside instigators like Fitton who were steadily gaining clout.

Publicly, Barr lauded Trump. Privately, his head hurt. By September, Barr was doing everything he could to avoid the president. There was little direct contact between the two men, and Barr had stopped visiting Trump at the White House.

He was sick of Trump making public statements and having others do so to whip up pressure against U.S. Attorney John Durham to bring more prosecutions or to put out a report on the Russia investigation before the election.

By mid-October, as Rudy Giuliani was trying to publicize the alleged contents of Hunter Biden's hard

drive, Trump allies started pressuring Barr to appoint a special counsel to investigate his opponent's son. Unbeknownst to Trump, the Justice Department was already investigating Hunter Biden. But Barr, in keeping with department policy, had kept the investigation a secret.

Barr maneuvered so that he dealt primarily with Meadows and Cipollone. Those around the two men could see Barr was annoyed and frustrated by the president's constant needling.

and less time stewing in the Oval Office.

But Barr's respite ended after Election Day, as Trump teamed up with an array of conspiracy theorists to amplify preposterous theories of election interference, arguing that Biden and the Chinese Communist Party, among others, had stolen the election from him.

On Nov. 29, Trump told Fox News that Barr's Department of Justice was "missing in action." Barr was furious. In fact, the attorney general had jettisoned department precedent to speed up federal investigations of election fraud allegations. The Justice Department wasn't missing in action — there just wasn't any evidence of major fraud.

Barr gave an interview to the AP's beat reporter, Michael Balsamo, making this clear on the record. It would bring things to a head.

As he headed to the White House for meetings on Dec. 1, Barr knew Balsamo's story might go live while he

was there. He soon found himself in the president's private dining room, along with Meadows, Cipollone, Trump and others. They sat at a long table under a glittering chandelier, amid Trump paraphernalia that was framed by floor-to-ceiling windows.

Trump was positioned in his usual seat at the head of the table, facing a huge flat-screen TV with the sound on low. On the screen, the conspiracy-drenched One America News network was playing a Michigan Senate hearing on election fraud.

Trump. There's no other reason for it. You must hate Trump," the president charged, speaking about himself in the third person.

"These things aren't panning out," Barr told the president, standing beside his chief of staff Will Levi. "The stuff that these people are filling your ear with just isn't true." Barr explained that if Trump wanted to contest the election results, the president's internal campaign lawyers would have to do it.

The Justice Department, he continued, had looked at the major fraud allegations that Trump's lawyers had leveled. "It's just bullshit," Barr told the president. Cipollone backed up Barr by saying the DOJ was investigating these claims.

Trump pointed at the TV and asked if Barr had been watching the hearing. Barr said he hadn't. "Maybe you should," the president said. Barr reiterated that the Justice Department was not ignoring the allegations,

but that Trump's outside lawyers were doing a terrible job.

"I'm a pretty informed legal observer and I can't fucking figure out what the theory is here," he added. "It's just scattershot. It's all over the hill and gone."

"Maybe," Trump said. "Maybe."

A week later, the New York Times reported that Barr was considering resigning. Barr's relationship with the

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Barr decided to quit before their private skirmishes spilled further into public view. Some speculated he had quit over the president's increasingly questionable pardons. But that had nothing to do with it. Barr had made it clear to Cipollone he did not want to be consulted on these post-election pardons. He did not need to hear about them until he received the official notices. The only pardon he made an effort to preemptively stop was for Edward Snowden.

On Dec. 14, Trump and Barr met one-on-one in the Oval Office. Others were there with Trump when the attorney general arrived. Barr asked for the room to be cleared so they could speak privately. He outlined his reasons for stepping aside early, explaining that while they'd had a good relationship, they now disagreed on key matters.

They did not need a public blowup. It was time to leave while the departure could still be amicable. Barr later told associates the meeting was calm and rational

and that he'd written his resignation letter — which effusively praised the president for his policy achievements — the day before.

Trump appreciated Barr's loyalty and praise. But praise and loyalty were not enough.

On election fraud, Barr had told Trump what he did not want to hear and the president had stopped listening. It was time for Barr to go.

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Read the rest of the "Off the rails" episodes here.

About this series: Our reporting is based on multiple interviews with current and former White House, campaign, government and congressional officials as well as direct eyewitnesses and people close to the president. Sources have been granted anonymity to share sensitive observations or details they would not be formally authorized to disclose. President Trump and other officials to whom quotes and actions have been attributed by others were provided the opportunity to confirm, deny or respond to reporting elements prior to publication.

"Off the rails" is reported by White House reporter Jonathan Swan, with writing, reporting and research assistance by Zach Basu. It was edited by Margaret Talev and Mike Allen and copy edited by Eileen O'Reilly. Illustrations by Sarah Grillo, Aïda Amer and Eniola Odetunde.

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Episode 7: Trump turns on Pence

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"The end is coming, Donald."

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Episode 3: Descent into madness ... Trump: "Sometimes you need a little crazy"

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Episode 3: The conspiracy goes too far. Trump's outside lawyers plot to seize voting machines and spin theories about communists, spies and computer software.

President Trump was sitting in the Oval Office one day in late November when a call came in from lawyer Sidney Powell. "Ugh, Sidney," he told the staff in the room before he picked up. "She's getting a little crazy, isn't she? She's really gotta tone it down. No one believes this stuff. It's just too much."

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Dec 22, 2020 - Politics & Policy

Trump trashes McConnell to fellow Republicans



Jonathan Swan



Photo: Xinhua/Ting Shen via Getty Images

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Republican lawmakers taking credit for saving McConnell's career with a tweet and robocall.

Why it matters: It's an extraordinary broadside against McConnell by the sitting president and most popular Republican in the party, ahead of a crucial runoff election in Georgia on Jan. 5 that will determine control of the Senate.

- "Sadly, Mitch forgot," reads the top of the slide sent to Republican senators by Trump's personal assistant, written in red for emphasis. "He was the first one off the ship."

Between the lines: While both the message and its delivery targeted McConnell, they also carried a subtle warning to other Republicans who may follow suit as the president grasps at the last straws of his election-fraud claim.

- Trump's remaining power over the GOP is not his waning authority as president, but the perception of his lingering ability to make or break politicians in their re-election campaigns.
- Many Republicans have been loath to criticize the president despite a string of court losses, including at the Supreme Court, because of their private fears that an enraged Trump will attack them and turn his band of loyal followers against them in a primary campaign.

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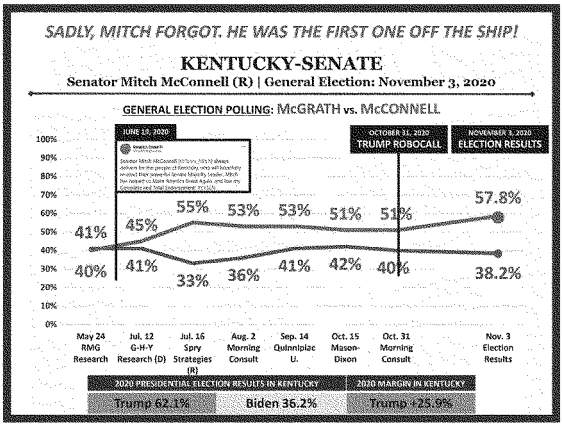
showed the Kentucky race in a dead heat until June 19, when the president sent a tweet endorsing the Senate leader.

- The slide shows polling tightening again to 51%-40% before an Oct. 31 Trump robocall. McConnell's final margin of victory over McGrath was 57.8%-38.2%.
- Notably, McConnell's wife Elaine Chao still serves in Trump's Cabinet as transportation secretary.



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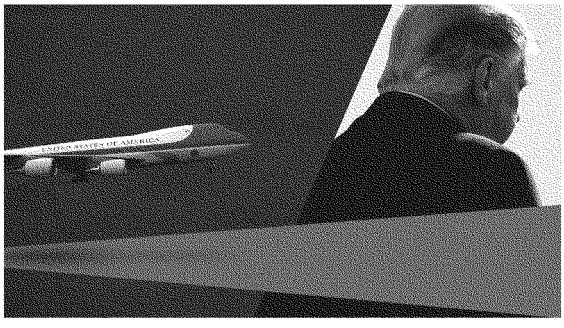
Episode 6: Last stand in Georgia

Jonathan Swan, Zachary Basu



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sacked the U.S. Capitol with two weeks left in his term. Axios takes you inside the collapse of a president with a special series.

Episode 6: Georgia had not backed a Democratic presidential candidate since 1992 and Donald Trump's defeat in this Deep South stronghold, and his reaction to that loss, would help cost Republicans the U.S. Senate as well. Georgia was Trump's last stand.

On Air Force One, President Trump was in a mood. He had been clear he did not want to return to Georgia, and yet somehow he'd been conscripted into another rally on the night of Jan. 4.

If both David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler — the two embattled Georgia senators he was campaigning for — lost their runoff elections the following day, the GOP would lose control of the U.S. Senate. And Trump did not want the blood of Georgia on his hands.

The TV in the plane's conference room was set to Fox News, with the sound off. As the screen showed footage of supporters filling up the Dalton, Georgia, rally space, Trump's spirits lifted briefly. "Look at that crowd," he mused.

Then Fox shifted to an interview with Georgia's Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger — whom Trump loathed for refusing to deny Joe Biden's win or validate myths about fraud. The president's disgust set back in. "What a horrible, incompetent guy," he growled.

The day before, the Washington Post had published an

Trump had accused Raffensperger of a "criminal offense."

Loeffler and Perdue had been desperate to get Trump to return to Georgia. They'd backed his 11th-hour demands for $2,000 stimulus checks, an about-face for the two multimillionaire conservatives.

In return for an enthusiastic Trump at the rally, Loeffler submitted to an even greater concession: She agreed to join other Trump loyalists in voting against the Electoral College results certification which was coming up on Jan. 6 — the day after the Georgia runoffs. It was a decision she would reverse once rioters stormed the Capitol.

The situation in Georgia was fraught. Establishment Republicans feared Trump's volatile denunciation of top state election officials would depress turnout.

In a series of phone calls through early and mid-November, the Senate majority leader, Mitch

McConnell, had tried to impress upon Trump just how high the stakes were for the Georgia runoffs. McConnell's pitch was direct and unvarnished: We need these wins to protect all the progress we've made on a range of issues, he warned. Trump's own legacy was on the ballot.

But the president wasn't hearing it. He would immediately derail these conversations with McConnell by ranting about the stolen election and his conspiracies of fraud.

Democrats would dominate the early Georgia vote, but they underestimated how big the Democrats' turnout would also be on Jan. 5 itself. Republicans believed 900,000 Election Day voters would put them in a decent position to win the runoffs and that anything over 1 million was golden. They were wrong.

Trump's growing congressional conspiracy caucus had a high-profile member on Air Force One that day. Joining the aides and family members who usually accompanied the president was the recently sworn-in Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, who had gained national notoriety for her past QAnon support and whose district included Dalton.

Also aboard were two key allies — Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Club for Growth president David McIntosh, a former Indiana congressman who co-founded the Federalist Society and had studied law under the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

They sat around the long table in the conference room in brown leather chairs, served quinoa salad with roasted chicken before waiters brought in macarons. Graham asked instead for his standing dessert order when flying on Air Force One: strawberries and cream.

The president came down when they were finished eating and stood at the head of the table, where he chatted with them for most of the flight. Graham and McIntosh, who had exchanged strategy notes before the flight, tried to shake him out of his mood.

endorsement of Loeffler and Perdue. "Everyone knows that if they win, you'll get the credit for putting them over the top. And it'll show that in an election where they don't cheat, Republicans win."

Trump disagreed: "No, they won't, David. They'll blame me if we lose. But if we win, they won't give me the credit."

Graham tried another tactic: "This is about your legacy, Mr. President."

"We've got to win these so that the Democrats can't unwind your legacy on everything from the courts to the economic policies to your work with China," Graham insisted.

At one point in the flight, Trump pulled McIntosh into his private office cabin to sign an autograph for McIntosh's personal trainer, an avid supporter of the president. McIntosh tried to open a conversation about the future. "Mr. President, you know, if it doesn't turn out..."

Trump interrupted, by asking: "What do you think my odds are?" — referring, 62 days after the election, to his chances of serving a second term. McIntosh leveled, "It doesn't look great, sir." Trump agreed, "Yeah, that's probably right."

"Mr. President, if it doesn't work out, will you run again?" McIntosh asked. Trump's response was a rare

In Dalton, Trump stepped out onto the stage with his wife, pointing, smiling, waving, and clapping, as Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A." blared. He was in his element, and the crowd went wild.

Less than 48 hours after Trump's Georgia rally, both races had been called for the Democrats, Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff. The Republicans had lost control of the Senate.

Trump was right that everyone would blame him. After all, he had spent months puncturing confidence in the voting system, turning his fire on Georgia's own GOP leadership, and obsessing over states that he had lost fair and square.

He had allowed outsiders and conspiracists to supplant the professionals around him. He had fed a national sense of mistrust, rage and despair. Georgia was the last state where Trump would take his stand.

He was about to incinerate his legacy. Within 24 hours, the feral ground troops the president had summoned to execute his fantasy of overturning the election would storm the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

🎧 **Listen to Jonathan Swan** on Axios' new investigative podcast series, called "How it happened: Trump's last stand."

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as direct eyewitnesses and people close to the president. Sources have been granted anonymity to share sensitive observations or details they would not be formally authorized to disclose. President Trump and other officials to whom quotes and actions have been attributed by others were provided the opportunity to confirm, deny or respond to reporting elements prior to publication.

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Episode 8: The siege

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Episode 8: The siege. An inside account of the deadly

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to block the certification of the Electoral College. And, finally, Trump's concession.

On Jan. 6, White House deputy national security adviser Matt Pottinger entered the West Wing in the mid-afternoon, shortly after his colleagues' phones had lit up with an emergency curfew alert from D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser.

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Episode 7: Trump turns on Pence

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Feds warn extremists may be emboldened to carry out additional attacks after Capitol insurrection

cnn.com/2021/01/13/politics/us-government-prepares-for-extremists/index.html

January 14, 2021



*(CNN)*Federal law enforcement officials are warning that domestic extremists are likely more emboldened to carry out attacks on President-elect Joe Biden's upcoming inauguration and throughout 2021 after seeing the success of last week's siege on the US Capitol.

The threat is further complicating an already monumental challenge facing law enforcement agencies tasked with securing Washington in the coming days.

CNN has learned that federal law enforcement agencies, in a series of bulletins and calls with local partners this week, have issued an urgent call for assistance in securing the nation's capital as the inauguration nears, and painted a dire picture of potential threats leading up to January 20.

State officials around the country are also ramping up security. In Oklahoma, House members were told not to come to the state capitol this weekend due to concerns about possible protests. Fencing has been erected around the Arizona state capitol "out of an abundance of caution" and Oregon State Police will be assisted by the National Guard as they deal with possible demonstrations.

Those concerns are bolstered by new warnings from federal officials that last Wednesday's attack on the US Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump will likely motivate

additional follow-on attacks by extremists throughout 2021, according to an intelligence bulletin dated Wednesday and obtained by CNN.

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Warning that the people who attacked the Capitol largely viewed their efforts as a success, the FBI, Department of Homeland Security and Office of the Director of National Intelligence said the attack "very likely will serve as a significant driver of violence" for a diverse set of domestic extremists, according to the bulletin.

The joint US government intelligence bulletin was first reported by The New York Times.

"The violent breach of the US Capitol Building is very likely part of an ongoing trend in which (extremists) exploit lawful protests, rallies, and demonstrations, and other gatherings to carry out ideologically-motivated violence and criminal activity," the intelligence bulletin warned.

The range of potential future targets of attack was varied, with intelligence officials warning in the bulletin that extremists could zero-in on government officials and institutions, as well as racial and religious minorities, journalists and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The bulletin also indicated that the January 6 attack may have served as a venue for extremists of differing ideological motivations to foster connections.

In addition to the perceived success of the January 6 Capitol attack, intelligence officials warned that the response by law enforcement could also motivate extremists to respond with violence, including at Biden's upcoming inauguration.

"Since the (Capitol attack), violent online rhetoric regarding the (inauguration) has increased, with some calling for unspecified 'justice' " for a rioter shot by police inside the Capitol, the bulletin said.

Other motivations for possible future attacks included anti-government views held by extremists, as well as grievances associated with the false narrative that the 2020 presidential election was stolen.

"The increasing prevalence and influence of conspiracy theories based on a belief in the existence of global or 'deep state' actors who work to manipulate various social, political, and/or economic conditions of the United States very likely serves as a driver of some (extremist) violence," the report said.

The conspiracy theory-laden language observed by US intelligence officials has often mirrored baseless claims made by Trump. Throughout his presidency, Trump has claimed without evidence that a nefarious group of "deep state" actors have been secretly working to undermine his presidency, and he has continually spread disinformation about the integrity of the 2020 election.

Feds working with police around the country

As law enforcement prepares to respond to upcoming protests before and during the inauguration, FBI Director Chris Wray and Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Ken Cuccinelli held a call Wednesday with law enforcement leaders from around the country to provide a briefing on the nationwide threat picture relating to planned protests, according to a person briefed on the call.

The source said the FBI briefed their law enforcement partners on intelligence reporting indicating protesters planned to conduct "peaceful, armed demonstrations" in Washington, DC, and at state capitols around the US on January 17 to protest the results of the 2020 election.

An FBI spokesperson confirmed the call, but did not provide additional details.

As CNN previously reported, an internal FBI bulletin disseminated to law enforcement warned that "armed protests" were being planned at all 50 state capitols and the US Capitol in Washington in the days leading up to the inauguration.

The FBI indicated federal law enforcement is currently working to identify any suspected extremists who may pose a threat at the planned armed demonstrations.

On the call, FBI officials said they remain concerned about the prospect of extremists appearing at planned rallies and conducting violence, and that violent domestic extremists continue to pose the most significant threat to Biden's inauguration, according to another source familiar with the call.

"The chatter is off the charts right now," one official told CNN on Tuesday regarding extremists talking online about future actions.

Federal officials stressed on the call with state, local, tribal and college campus law enforcement leaders that the FBI will not tolerate extremists using the First Amendment as a guide to incite violence, adding that they expect threats will continue past Biden's inauguration, the source said.

In addition to the potential threats at government buildings, officials discussed seeing an increased number of threats to private companies and their executives in recent days.

According to the source, federal officials said on the call that Russian actors have been amplifying the false narrative that members of Antifa infiltrated Trump supporters during the riot at the US Capitol, and the Chinese have seized on news stories showing chaos in the US.

Secret Service report shows government is monitoring threats

Another government report is shedding light on how law enforcement officials are monitoring the threat of potential violence in the coming days.

According to an internal US Secret Service report dated January 11 and obtained by CNN, analysts with the Secret Service's team responsible for monitoring websites and social media for planned demonstrations note that protesters unhappy with the 2020 election results are using online platforms to organize events in the Washington area and around the country.

In one online forum observed by investigators, the report indicated that a group calling itself "American Patriots Nationwide" is organizing a violent demonstration in Washington beginning on January 16. On its website, the group indicated it plans to use its members to surround the Capitol, White House and Supreme Court, and only allow the entry of people designated by Trump.

The Secret Service report said the American Patriots Nationwide group also planned to detain Democratic politicians who "played a role in planning or executing or supporting the attempted coup of the United States of America from 2016 to 2020."

The Secret Service bulletin did not offer an assessment on the realistic nature of the planned rallies nor how much confidence investigators have in the ability of organizers to achieve their stated objectives.

According to the report, groups associated with the Boogaloo movement planned to host an armed march from the Washington Monument to the White House, and encouraged its members to bring weapons.

Other separate events noted in the Secret Service report similarly encouraged protest attendees to come armed, although organizers did not explicitly encourage violence.

The District of Columbia has some of the strictest gun laws in the country and the open carrying of firearms is prohibited.

For Inauguration Day, the Secret Service report indicated that analysts identified more than 35 rallies being planned online around Washington.

One event dubbed the Million Militia March encouraged attendees to bring weapons. "The group claims they will not attack, but will defend," the Secret Service report noted.

As part of its protective mission, the Secret Service routinely reviews so-called "open source intelligence" to review planned rallies and protests staged near official events. The Secret Service report obtained by CNN indicated that recent efforts by social media companies to suspend users engaged in election-related disinformation has, in effect, hindered the ability of analysts to identify some details of planned inauguration protests.

Not all of the planned demonstrations listed in the Secret Service report were pro-Trump. According to analysts, one group is planning a rally called "Smoking to Trump's Sorrow," in which attendees will join to together to smoke marijuana and celebrate the end of Trump's presidency.

Another planned DC event, dubbed the "Lesbian U-Haul Trump Out Parade" is being organized to help move Trump out of the White House, although the Secret Service did not indicate what logistics the group planned to employ to accomplish its stated goal.

CNN's Zachary Cohen, Christina Carrega and Evan Perez contributed to this report

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Inside the remarkable rift between Donald Trump and Mike Pence

By **Josh Dawsey** and **Ashley Parker**

Jan. 11, 2021 at 7:19 p.m. CST

Vice President Pence was in hiding from a violent mob of Trump supporters in the Capitol last Wednesday when the presidential tweet attacking him posted.

"Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!" President Trump wrote at 2:24 p.m.

Trump never called him that day or in the days following to make sure Pence was okay — or to discuss a governmental response to the deadly riots the president incited.

The remarkable break between the two men — played out over a tense few days as the country convulsed from a riot spurred on by the president — is a startling capstone to a relationship long defined by Pence's loyalty and subservience. The vice president who once spent hours a day with Trump, defended some of his most incendiary comments and was careful to not speak ill of him — even to his own closest advisers — now seems to be largely estranged from him.

Pence has committed to attending the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala D. Harris, even though Trump is not going. The vice president has begun telling staff goodbye, posing for pictures and having sentimental moments with key aides in his Executive Office suite.

A senior administration official said Trump and Pence finally met in the Oval Office on Monday night and "had a good conversation, discussing the week ahead and reflecting on the last four years of the administration's work and accomplishments." Pence is under pressure from Democrats to invoke the 25th Amendment, a process to remove the president from office, but he is not expected to do so, aides said.

Trump's treatment of Pence has reverberated badly in the White House and among campaign aides, many of whom see it as unseemly and unfair. One senior administration official described it as "unconscionable, even for the president."

"We're very lucky that Mike Pence is a decent guy and rational and levelheaded," said Joe Grogan, the former head of the Domestic Policy Council under Trump. "If he had been replaced by someone as nuts as the people who have been surrounding the president as the primary advice-givers for the last few months, we could have had even more of a bloodbath. Imagine what would have happened if Pence was devious and vile and didn't stand up for the Constitution."

Judd Deere, a White House spokesman, declined to comment on the president's current views of Pence or why Trump pressured him to such lengths to overturn the election.

"Vice President Pence has been a critical part of this Administration and helped President Trump achieve unprecedented successes on behalf of the American people. We are all grateful for the vice president's service to the country," Deere said.

Critics say Pence deserves less credit after standing by the president too long — not forcefully speaking out against child separation at the border, Trump's calls with Ukraine's president and his numerous attacks. Many note that he chose to serve Trump for four years and was the head of the administration's badly mangled coronavirus response, in which more than 370,000 have died.

"Republicans have said for decades that you can't negotiate with terrorists, and Trump is a terrorist and Pence decided to negotiate with him because he thought it was in his best interest, and this was inevitable," said Stuart Stevens, a longtime GOP consultant and Trump critic. "Mike Pence threw aside everything he said he believed in — everything — I mean, here is a guy who railed against adultery on his radio show, and then teams up with Donald Trump and of course it was going to end this way."

Pence also faces serious opprobrium from Trump's supporters, including some who chanted for his hanging during last Wednesday's siege and yelled in the Capitol, "Where's Mike Pence?"

"He has no future in the Republican Party," Stevens said. "When the base of the party is not booing you, but chanting hang you, that's a bad sign."

Asked about the chants, Deere did not mention the vice president by name in his response. "We strongly condemn all calls to violence, including those against any member of this administration," Deere said.

For Pence, it is an uncomfortable and unfamiliar position. One former senior administration official said Pence had previously described his job as doing most anything Trump had asked him to do.

"The president could say, 'Mike I want you to go fly to Asia,' and he would do it, or 'Mike, I want you take over the coronavirus task force,' and he would do it; never questioned a thing," said a former senior administration official, who like some others spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak candidly. "Pence would spend hours in the Oval. Pence would come in, he'd get his daily brief and then he'd get word of when the president would be coming into the Oval and then he'd go over there and they'd spend hours together. For them to not speak anymore is a paradigm I just never would have imagined."

The rupture began Dec. 15, when Trump decided erroneously that Pence was his last resort to block his election loss. The president began telling others to pressure his vice president to object to the final counting of electoral college results by Congress, and the topic came up regularly in conversation between the president and the vice president, officials said.

Those putting pressure included lawyers Rudolph W. Giuliani and John Eastman, trade adviser Peter Navarro and conspiracy-minded Trump ally Sidney Powell, officials said, along with other lawyers and outside advisers sent by Chief of Staff Mark Meadows. Trump told "almost anyone who called to tell him he could still win to call Pence," one senior administration official said. Pence at times was in the Oval Office when Trump called people to try to convince the vice president, an official said.

Pence was subjected to repeated phone calls from Trump, including one as late as last Wednesday morning — and to implicit threats from the president that he would attack him if he didn't object to Biden's victory, officials said.

"Do the courageous thing, Mike," Trump said in one meeting, according to a person present.

"It will be bad for you and for the country if you don't," Trump said at another time, according to an official describing the meeting.

Some of the arguments were spurious, officials said. One included the certification of the electoral college votes in 1801, when Vice President Thomas Jefferson ruled electors from Georgia as defective. Another was that Pence could disregard some states because they sent in multiple electoral ballots. When the vice president's team met with the congressional parliamentarian, they learned that people send fake electoral college votes every year, including one sender who signs them "General Magnifico," a senior administration official said. The 1800 election isn't applicable to the current election, officials said.

"There was never any sort of convincing case that the president or any of the lawyers around him made," a senior administration official said. Pence tried to be respectful and listen to everyone but told his team to conduct an independent analysis of the laws around certification.

Pence was uncomfortable with the arguments and asked his team to conduct its own analysis.

Marc Short, the vice president's chief of staff, began preparing for an inevitable rupture, a person who talked to him said, and never considered that Pence could please the president.

Pence's team became convinced that Trump was behind a lawsuit against the vice president, and that it was also the work of Powell, two officials said.

The White House declined to comment. Powell did not respond to a request for comment.

Trump grew livid when learning Pence moved to dismiss the suit with the help of Justice Department attorneys — and won, according to administration officials.

Senators regularly told the vice president they didn't have evidence to support the president's claims that he won the election. They wanted to be supportive, but they needed evidence, a Pence adviser said. Pence told them he'd pass along the messages, but the White House never provided any evidence to many of the senators, the adviser said.

The day before the certification, Trump was extremely angry, a person present in the Oval Office said, venting at Pence, lawyer Pat Cipollone and others as Pence told him he was planning to certify the results. Pence was not involved in any of the planning of the Ellipse rally and had no idea Trump was planning to incite a mob to storm the Capitol.

Pence met with Trump multiple times before Wednesday to talk him through the dynamic and explain why he couldn't do what Trump wanted, advisers said. After Wednesday's final pitch did not go well, Trump went to the Ellipse and gave a fiery, falsehood-laden speech, where, to a bloodthirsty crowd, he repeatedly pressured Pence to overturn the results.

Pence went to the Capitol and prepared to certify the results. Soon, the mob descended, and Trump verbally attacked the vice president.

Pence declined to leave the Capitol after protesters breached the compound, even though his security detail on three occasions suggested it would be a good idea to do so, a senior administration official said. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and others left.

While Trump was watching TV and resisting entreaties to tell the mob to go home, Pence repeatedly called military officials and others in the government to expedite the National Guard's deployment, officials said. He talked with McConnell about reinstating the certification vote that evening and met with Capitol Police officials, even as Trump and lawyers continued to call senators and House members to try to slow down the certification. Neither Trump nor anyone in the White House checked on Pence, although Short eventually called Trump Chief of Staff Mark Meadows to update him on their safety.

Throughout the ordeal, it was Pence, not Trump, who was in close contact with military and congressional leaders about bringing in the National Guard and securing the Capitol.

"Although the Vice President and I were not together during the evacuation, he personally got very involved and stayed in close contact with me as we worked to secure urgently needed resources to thwart the mob and I appreciate those efforts greatly," McConnell said in a statement to The Washington Post. McConnell told others he was enraged with Trump and planned to never speak to him again.

Pence skipped his speech to the Republican National Committee meeting, scheduled for Thursday, and did not come to the White House. He returned on Friday.

An adviser says Pence feels at peace with what he did. Pence's aides say he needs to make money in the private sector and may write a book. He is keeping his options open for a potential 2024 presidential bid.

"Pence withstood enormous public and private pressure at an historic moment. He followed the Constitution, upheld the rule of law and treated people on all sides with civility. Those who know him well are not surprised," said Tim Phillips, who leads Americans for Prosperity, a Koch-affiliated group.

Trump told aides that he wanted to ban Short, the vice president's chief of staff, from the West Wing, for giving Pence advice to certify and that he was not interested in seeing Pence. But no one enforced the ban, and Short continued to come to work, officials said. He scheduled a going-away event for Pence on Friday.

On Friday evening, Pence came to his office suite with his wife Karen and his daughter, Charlotte, for a farewell ceremony. He told the roomful of aides that he hoped they were proud of what they'd accomplished and encouraged them to continue to work in public service, a person present at the meeting said. He was given a four-minute standing ovation and presented with his Cabinet chair.

He told the room that early Thursday as he left the Capitol, after certifying the results for Biden, he received a text message from his chief of staff.

"2 Timothy 4:7," the text said. The Bible verse reads: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

Updated January 17, 2021

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Trump's second impeachment

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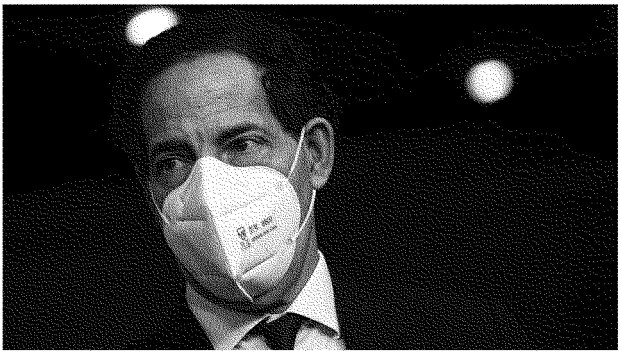
POLITICS

Jamie Raskin Lost His Son. Then He Fled a Mob.

The day before the Capitol riot, a congressman buried his 25-year-old son, who had left a note for his family on New Year's Eve.

JOHN HENDRICKSON **JANUARY 8, 2021**



DREW ANGERER / GETTY

Updated 4:22 p.m. ET on January 13, 2021.

As the mob seized the Capitol, Jamie Raskin thought not of himself, but of his younger daughter, Tabitha, who had asked him not to go to work that day. "This is an essential constitutional moment," he had told her. Rather than stay home, he proposed another idea: What if she came along?

When Raskin, the congressman from Maryland, rose to address the chamber around 1:45 p.m. on Wednesday, he received a bipartisan standing ovation. He peered around the room, patting his heart in gratitude. His fingers lingered over a torn black cloth affixed to the lapel of his gray suit jacket. The day before, Raskin had buried his 25-year-old son, who on New Year's Eve left his family a note: *Please forgive me. My illness won today. Please look after each other, the animals, and the global poor for me. All my love, Tommy.*

On the House floor, Raskin quoted Abraham Lincoln, reminding his fellow lawmakers that they were there to carry out the will of the people, not the orders of one man. Minutes later, voices echoed through the Capitol's marble hallways. Raskin heard what sounded like a battering ram slamming against the door. He and his colleagues were instructed to retrieve their gas masks. Guns appeared. The chaplain led the room in a prayer. Raskin's mind flashed to Tabitha, 23, who, along

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Raskin and the others on the House floor evacuated the building and made their way to a secure location, but spectators had to seek shelter inside the Capitol. Raskin's chief of staff, Julie Tagen, led Tabitha and Hank to an office, where they hid beneath a table while insurrectionists overtook the building. A group of rioters repeatedly attempted to enter the room. Tagen stood guard next to the blockaded entrance, clutching a fire iron. "I asked her to protect them with her life, and she did," Raskin told me.

[Read: Scenes from an American insurrection]

I reached out to Raskin yesterday because he had been through more in one week than most people experience in a lifetime: He lost his son to suicide, he and his daughter survived a rampage, and, in the hours before we talked, he began working with two colleagues to prepare articles of impeachment against the president of the United States. "The president is a lethal danger to the American republic and the American people," Raskin told me. "There has been nothing like this since the Civil War."

He had gone to bed at about 5 a.m. Thursday morning and was running on fumes —members of Congress "were living off of Skittles and Cheez-Its." We spoke first in the early evening and then again late last night. There was unmistakable exhaustion in his voice, but he was both lucid and candid. Over the previous seven nights, Raskin and his wife, Sarah, had stayed up late talking about their son. I asked if speaking about the loss makes it easier. He paused.

"My wife captured it perfectly: She said that there is so much pain and so much love, and it's all mixed together," he said. "But every day we're able to disentangle them more, so that we can experience the love more purely and the pain more purely, and it doesn't hurt to love him."

Raskin spoke fondly of Tommy for long, uninterrupted stretches of time. Occasionally I could hear the voices of his family members in the background. "When you lose a child under these circumstances, you're plagued with thousands

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quicksand. The questions never end. And people tell us it's normal, it's natural—but ultimately it's unresolvable and inscrutable and futile."

Two days before the attack at the Capitol, Raskin released a 1,700-word tribute to his son. It was more than a standard obituary; it was an intimate, soulful look at Tommy's kaleidoscopic life: soccer player, poet, playwright, pianist, anti-war activist, animal lover, brother, cousin, son, and, in recent years, person with depression. At the time of his death, Tommy was attending Harvard Law School, as his father had in the 1980s. Due to the pandemic, he was temporarily living in the basement apartment at his parents' house.

"He really did feel every little bit of pain and suffering around him in the world and he wanted to act on it, but he was also an enormously fun-loving and comical person," Raskin told me. "He wanted everybody not just to have enough food; he wanted everybody to be happy and laughing, including himself." A memorial fund has already raised a quarter of a million dollars. A neighbor told Raskin that when her son was in middle school and depressed, Tommy was the only kid who tried to spend any time with him, and that he always tried to make him smile. Notes from strangers continue to pour in. "One guy wrote us a letter and said that he had had cancer twice and he had depression, and he would take 10 cases of cancer over depression." Another person simply referred to it as the "Beast," with a capital *B*.

"One of my close colleagues in the House called me and said something which really floored me—I almost dropped the phone," Raskin said. "She said, 'You have to respect his decision.' And I said, 'What are you talking about? We have to accept his decision because it was made.' But she said, 'You loved him, you gave him everything, and he loved you. But obviously the pain was unbearable for him, which is why he went to these lengths, and nobody can know anybody else's pain.' And I've been fighting with that in my head ever since she said it."

Republican colleagues have reached out too. I asked why he thought his political opponents are able to empathize with his son's death, but not reckon in any serious way with the forces that yielded Wednesday's attack—an event that has, as of this writing, taken five lives. "I'll probably spend the rest of my life trying to figure it out," he said.

[Read: Better security cannot stop a coup]

I told him that it was notable to include the reality of Tommy's mental illness in the tribute essay, including the message from his suicide note. "Why would we suppress that?" Raskin asked. "I want to live by that note. That is my road map for the rest of my life." He said Americans need to use society's resources to work toward a cure for depression. "But in the meantime," he said, "we obviously have to bring it out of the shadows."

Multiple congressional colleagues asked Raskin on Wednesday how he was able to be present, let alone serve as a floor leader during the Electoral College fight. "I really felt that my son was with me—and you know, that may sound too mystical and spiritual or religious for some of my rationalist friends, but I felt very much the spirit of my son with me."

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In this period, he said, "I've only done the work that I have to do." The work just happens to be impeaching a runaway president. "The republic is in danger. I made a commitment when Trump was elected that I would do whatever I had to do to defend our democracy."

Around 2:30 a.m. Thursday morning, some 12 hours after he finished his first floor speech, Raskin returned to the microphone to oppose the Republican objection to the Pennsylvania vote certification. "Madam Speaker, my family suffered an unspeakable trauma on New Year's Eve, a week ago, but mine was not the only family to suffer such terrible pain in 2020," he said. "Enough, my beloved colleagues. It is time for America to heal. It is time for our families and communities to come together. Let us stop pouring salt in the wounds of America for no reason at all."

This story previously misstated the time that Representative Jamie Raskin rose to address the House on January 6. He began to speak around 1:45 p.m., not 2:15 p.m.

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STATEMENT OF FACTS

On January 6, 2021, your affiant, [redacted], was on duty and performing my official duties as a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation "FBI"). As a Special Agent, I am authorized by law to engage in or supervise the prevention, detention, investigation, or prosecution of violations of Federal criminal laws.

On January 6, 2021, a joint session of the United States Congress convened at the United States Capitol, which is located at First Street, SE, in Washington, D.C. During the joint session, elected members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate were meeting in separate chambers of the United States Capitol to certify the vote count of the Electoral College of the 2020 Presidential Election, which had taken place on November 3, 2020. The joint session began at approximately 1:00 p.m. Vice President Mike Pence was present and presiding in the Senate chamber.

The U.S. Capitol is secured 24 hours a day by U.S. Capitol Police. Restrictions around the U.S. Capitol include permanent and temporary security barriers and posts manned by U.S. Capitol Police. Only authorized people with appropriate identification are allowed access inside the U.S. Capitol. On January 6, 2021, the exterior plaza of the U.S. Capitol was also closed to members of the public.

With the joint session underway and with Vice President Mike Pence presiding, a large crowd gathered outside the U.S. Capitol. Temporary and permanent barricades surround the exterior of the U.S. Capitol building, and U.S. Capitol Police were present and attempting to keep the crowd away from the Capitol building and the proceedings underway inside. Between 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m.., certain individuals in the crowd forced their way through, up, and over the barricades and officers of the U.S. Capitol Police, and the crowd advanced to the exterior façade of the building. At such time, the joint session was still underway and the exterior doors and windows of the U.S. Capitol were locked or otherwise secured. Members of the U.S. Capitol Police attempted to maintain order and keep the crowd from entering the Capitol; however, individuals in the crowd forced entry into the U.S. Capitol, including by breaking windows. Shortly thereafter, at approximately 2:20 p.m. members of the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate, including the President of the Senate, Vice President Mike Pence, were instructed to—and did—evacuate the chambers. Accordingly, the joint session of the United States Congress was effectively suspended until shortly after 8:00 p.m. Vice President Pence remained in the United States Capitol from the time he was evacuated from the Senate Chamber until the sessions resumed.

During national news coverage of the aforementioned events, video footage which appeared to be captured on mobile devices of persons present on the scene depicted evidence of violations of local and federal law, including scores of individuals inside the U.S. Capitol building without authority to be there.

JON RYAN SCHAFFER (SCHAFFER) of Columbus, Indiana, traveled to the District of Columbia to participate in a rally and protest at the U.S. Capitol. **SCHAFFER** is a person of some celebrity in the heavy metal music industry, and was identified by numerous individuals

when his photograph was published by the FBI seeking identification of individuals who participated in the events of January 6, 2021.

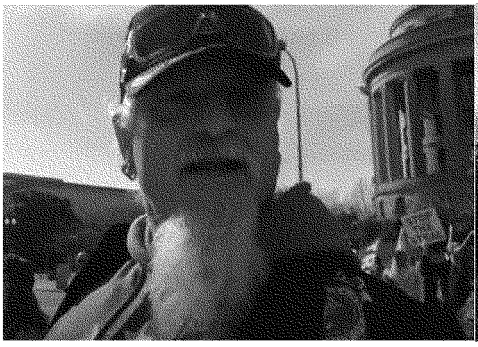
SCHAFFER was among the rioters who sprayed United States Capitol Police officers with "bear spray," a form of capsaicin pepper spray sold by many outdoors retailers, as part of their efforts to push the officers back inside the Capitol and breach the Capitol Building themselves. **SCHAFFER** was photographed and captured on surveillance video carrying "bear spray" and engaging in verbal altercations with Capitol Police officers inside the Capitol Building. **SCHAFFER** is seen holding a clear sunglasses in one photograph, and bear spray in other photographs.



The photographs show **SCHAFFER** in a blue hooded sweatshirt under a tactical vest with a baseball cap that reads "Oath Keepers Lifetime Member." The "Oath Keepers" is an organization that characterizes itself as a militia of former law enforcement and military personnel and has often, as a group, urged President Trump to declare Martial Law in order to prevent the Congress from certifying the Electoral College Results.

SCHAFFER, who is the front man of the heavy metal band "Iced Earth," has long held far-right extremist views. During an interview in 2017, **SCHAFFER** identified himself as an "anarchist" and referred to the federal government as a "criminal enterprise." During that same interview, **SCHAFFER** stated that the 2016 Presidential election was "rigged."

On November 14, 2020, **SCHAFFER** participated in the "Million MAGA March" in Washington, D.C. with other Oath Keepers members. Schaffer was photographed wearing the same blue hooded sweatshirt and clear plastic sunglasses that he wore on January 6, 2021.





SCHAFFER was approached by a member of the press during the March, and made numerous statements indicating his intent to join others in fighting the election results – with violence if necessary. Specifically, **SCHAFFER** stated the following:

> My name's **JON SCHAFFER**, I'm from Indiana. A group of thugs and criminals hijacked this country a long time ago. And now they're making their big move, and it's not gonna happen. . . People need to wake up and snap out of the Matrix, because they're going down. They made the move, they're messing with the wrong people here, trust me on that. And we needed it to be open like this. Open fraud. Open theft. Because now we see you, and you're going down, mark my words.

When asked if he expected the protest to involve violence, **SCHAFFER** stated "if somebody wants to bring violence, I think there's a lot of us here that are ready for it. We don't want that, but if they bring it we're going to respond to that, trust me." **SCHAFFER** went on to state:

> We're not going to merge into some globalist, communist system, it will not happen. There will be a lot of bloodshed if it comes down to that, trust me. The American people will not go for that bullshit once they understand what's actually happening. So that's where we're at. Nobody wants this, but they're pushing us to a point where we have no choice.

Based on the foregoing, your affiant submits that there is probable cause to believe that **JON RYAN SCHAFFER** violated 18 U.S.C. §§ 1752(a)(1), (2), and (4), which make it a crime to (1) knowingly enter or remain in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority to do so; and (2) knowingly, and with intent to impede or disrupt the orderly conduct of Government business or official functions, engage in disorderly or disruptive conduct in, or within such proximity to, any restricted building or grounds when, or so that, such conduct, in fact, impedes or disrupts the orderly conduct of Government business or official functions; and(4) knowingly engage in any act of physical violence against any person or property in any restricted building or

grounds, or attempt or conspires to do so. For purposes of Section 1752(a), a "restricted building" includes a posted, cordoned off, or otherwise restricted area of a building or grounds where the President or other person protected by the Secret Service, including the Vice President, is or will be temporarily visiting; or any building or grounds so restricted in conjunction with an event designated as a special event of national significance. For purposes of Section 1752(b), "bear spray" is a dangerous weapon. For purposes of Section 1752(b), the storming of the United States Capitol building resulted in "significant bodily injury."

Your affiant submits there is also probable cause to believe that **JON RYAN SCHAFFER** violated 40 U.S.C. §§ 5104(e)(2)(A), (F) and (G), which make it a crime to willfully and knowingly: (A) enter or remain on the floor of either House of Congress or in any cloakroom or lobby adjacent to that floor, in the Rayburn Room of the House of Representatives, or in the Marble Room of the Senate, unless authorized to do so pursuant to rules adopted, or an authorization given, by that House; (F) engage in an act of physical violence in the Grounds or any of the Capitol Buildings; and (G) parade, demonstrate, or picket in any of the Capitol Buildings.

[redacted]

SPECIAL AGENT, FBI

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1 by telephone, this 16th day of January 2021.

2021.01.16
14:35:24 -05'00'

ZIA M. FARUQUI

U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Read Mayor Bowser's Presentation on DC's COVID-19 Situational Update: January 15.
DC Entered Phase Two of Reopening on June 22. View the Guidance.

Joint Statement from Bowser, Hogan and Northam on Planning for the 59th Presidential Inauguration

Monday, January 11, 2021

Today, the chief executives of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia held a joint call to discuss planning for the 59th Presidential Inauguration. The call covered recent requests by DC to the federal government, and the leaders discussed the need for enhanced planning and preparation compared to previous inaugurations given the chaos, injury, and death experienced at the United States Capitol during the insurrection on January 6, 2021. The Mayor and the Governors agreed to urge Americans not to come into Washington, DC for the Inauguration and to instead participate virtually.

They issued the following statement:

"January 6, 2021 is now a seminal moment in American history. We are grateful for the courageous efforts of every law enforcement officer, Guard member, and first responder who heroically worked to secure the Capitol and ensure our nation's democracy prevailed.

"On January 20, there will be a transition of power, and we will work together, and with our partners in the federal government, to ensure the safety of the National Capital

Region. Due to the unique circumstances surrounding the 59th Presidential Inauguration, including last week's violent insurrection as well as the ongoing and deadly COVID-19 pandemic, we are taking the extraordinary step of encouraging Americans not to come to Washington, DC and to instead participate virtually.

"In this very trying time, January 6 was a dark moment for our nation. But we know that we will get through this period because American ideals are stronger than one extreme ideology. Together, we will overcome extremism and get back to the work of our residents."

Office of the Mayor

Email: eom@dc.gov

Ask the Mayor

Connect With Us
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 727-2643
TTY: 711



Muriel Bowser
Mayor

https://www.stltoday.com/news/national/crime-and-courts/how-trump-s-pied-pipers-rallied-a-faithful-mob-to-the-u-s-capitol/article_2d837092-e962-5bdb-8b96-f65b137c7671.html

How Trump's pied pipers rallied a faithful mob to the U.S. Capitol

By Joseph Tanfani, Michael Berens and Ned Parker Reuters
Jan 12, 2021



March for Trump bus tour kicks-off at Doral Central Park for a two week multi-state rally in support of President Donald Trump, in Doral, Fla., on Nov. 29, 2020. REUTERS/Maria Alejandra Cardona/File Photo

Maria Alejandra Cardona

Weeks before mobs besieged the Capitol building in Washington, a bright red bus crisscrossed the United States, emblazoned with a huge image of President Donald Trump in suit and tie with a clenched fist above his shoulder.

At more than 25 stops — in parking lots and airplane hangers in states including Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Kentucky and Tennessee — flight-attendant-turned-political-activist Amy Kremer and other speakers exhorted crowds to join her and others in Washington to fight for Trump and overturn the election.

Last Wednesday, the tour reached its final destination, Washington, D.C., and Kremer took to the stage at the "March for Trump" rally she had been organizing for weeks.

"It is up to you and I to save this Republic," Kremer told thousands of self-styled patriots in Ellipse park, south of the White House, in one of many warm-up speeches for Trump. "We are not going to back down, are we? Keep up the fight!"

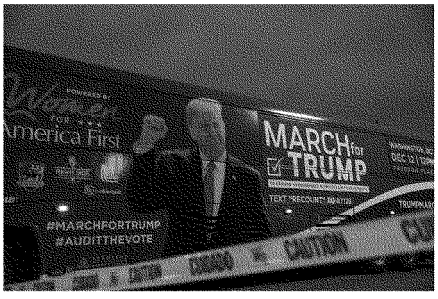
In the weeks leading up to Wednesday's deadly riots on Capitol Hill, Kremer and a loose coalition of groups and sponsors rallied the faithful, recruiting hardcore Trump supporters across the United States in a last-ditch effort to overturn the Nov. 3 election, inspired by conspiracy theories and whipped into action by Trump's desperate calls to "save" democracy by reversing his loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

The story of how the pied-pipers of Trumpism enlisted supporters illustrates the dramatic evolution of Trump's voters into an effective and well-financed network of activist groups. The crowds that rally organizers recruited were joined in Washington by more radical right-wing groups that have increasingly become a fixture at pro-Trump demonstrations — including white supremacists and devotees of the QAnon conspiracy theory, which casts Trump as a savior figure and elite Democrats as a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles and cannibals.

Others among the diverse array of promoters for post-election Trump protests included a pillow magnate, a right-wing college students' organization, the newly formed activist network Stop the Steal and an upstart broadcasting group begun by a stay-at-home dad who devoted himself to chronicling Trump rallies, according to a Reuters examination of disclosure records and interviews with protest organizers.

Neither Kremer nor Women for America First responded to requests for comment. The organization posted a statement on its website saying it was saddened and disappointed by the Capitol violence, which it said was "instigated by a few bad actors."

About two hours after Kremer's speech, Trump took the same rally stage and exhorted this volatile mix of supporters repeatedly to "fight" — using the word more than 20 times — and "not take it any longer." He ridiculed "weak" and "pathetic" Republicans and told the crowd they must "be strong" before dispatching the "patriots" on a march to the Capitol.



A bus with the image of U.S. President Donald Trump on it is seen during an event to show support for him in Macomb County, Mich., on Dec. 8, 2020. REUTERS/Emily Elconin /File Photo

Emily Elconin

Many in the crowd of thousands took that fight to the Capitol Police with far more than fiery rhetoric, battling officers with a makeshift arsenal that included metal pipes, wooden poles with embedded nails, aluminum baseball bats, a hockey stick, a wooden door ripped off its hinges, and a coffee table, according to Reuters photographers at the scene and other videos posted online. One American flag waver bludgeoned an officer repeatedly with the flagpole as fellow rioters dragged the cop from the building and down a set of outside steps.

"We the people are not going to take it anymore!" one woman shouted through a bullhorn as rioters climbed through a broken window on the west side of the Capitol building, a video posted online showed. "You are not going to take away our Trumpy bear. You are not going to take away our votes and our freedom."

Five people died in connection with the Capitol violence, including a police officer, as well as a protester shot by police. That crescendo of violence followed two months of rising anger among Trump loyalists, harnessed by protest organizers including Kremer

and many others. The stolen election narrative — amplified by right-wing media — quickly became gospel for millions of Trump loyalists despite the failure of dozens of lawsuits his attorneys filed claiming election fraud.

A White House official said the rally was organized by outside groups, and the White House became involved when the president decided to speak there. The official declined further comment.

Another important player and financier of the post-election protest movement was Mike Lindell, founder and CEO of the My Pillow company, whose advertisements and political commentary are a fixture on conservative media. Lindell — a self-described former cocaine addict and alcoholic who says he found sobriety through Christianity — helped sponsor a two-week March for Trump bus tour that ended in Washington on Dec. 14 and spoke at five stops.

My Pillow is a major advertiser and sponsor of the Right Side Broadcasting Network, a conservative media group that went along on the tour to provide daily coverage.

Lindell said his financial backing of the bus tour ended in mid-December. He emphasized to Reuters that he did not help finance subsequent trips to promote the Jan. 6 rally that would devolve into riots. He said he did, however, attend the rally before the march to the Capitol that day, and he spoke the day before during rallies at Freedom Plaza, near the White House.



A supporter of President Donald Trump sprays smoke during a "Stop the Steal" protest outside of the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 6, 2021. REUTERS/Stephanie Keith/File Photo

Stephanie Keith

The Capitol rioting has not changed Lindell's views on contesting the election. "I'm never letting the fraud go," he told Reuters. "It was the most corrupt election in U.S. history, and probably in world history." (Christopher Krebs, a cyber-security chief for the Trump administration, called the election the most secure in the nation's history shortly after the vote. Trump fired him.)

Then Lindell cited the latest baseless conspiracy theory circulating among right-wing groups — that leftist activists, masquerading as Trump supporters, were responsible for the violence at the Capitol.

"It was all a setup," he said.

The red bus

For weeks after the election, Kremer's organization fielded the big red Trump bus — emblazoned with the logo of My Pillow and other sponsors — to whip up supporters to assemble in Washington and contest the outcome. At stops for rallies, speakers mixed religious and nationalist fervor with incendiary claims about the election. Lindell spoke at five of them.

A Jan. 3 rally in Franklin, Tennessee — a stop on the bus tour — featured Pastor Greg Locke of Global Vision Bible Church, a firebrand who has railed against pandemic-related restrictions on church services. He praised the Boogaloo movement — a loose network of anti-government extremists that aim to foment a new civil war — for doing the Lord's work by fighting Trump's election loss.

"They stood up for what is right, and God promoted them," he said.

Locke told the crowd to never give up the fight for Trump's second term: "We're not going to back up, pack up, stack up or shut up until we've been taken up by the glory of God."

Locke did not respond to requests for comment.



Pro-Trump protesters clash with police during a rally to contest the certification of the 2020 U.S. presidential election results by the U.S. Congress, at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 6, 2021. REUTERS/Shannon Stapleton/File Photo

Shannon Stapleton

The rallies were covered start to finish by the Right Side Broadcasting Network — a right-wing media venture with close ties to Trump. The outfit was started in 2015 by Joe Seales, a stay-at-home dad who thought Trump's rallies weren't getting enough coverage. He recruited a freelancer to cover a Trump appearance and posted the raw video to YouTube. To his amazement, viewers grew by the thousands, then to a million, Seales has told media organizations. The network became a magnet for right-wing voices and jumped into the mainstream when the new Trump administration granted Seale's team access to the White House press room.

Now with two dozen staffers and an office in Auburn, Alabama, the network has devoted post-election coverage largely to unsubstantiated allegations of voter fraud. Its correspondents touted its alliance with Kremer's tour, and praised Lindell for his support of the network.

"My Pillow is one of the main sponsors for the Women for America First bus tour, and he is our partner for today," one correspondent said during a report on a Jan. 2 bus stop in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Right Side founder Seales could not be reached for comment.

Wild protest!

The Jan. 6 rally that preceded the Capitol riot was promoted vigorously by Trump and his loyalists.

"Be there, will be wild!," the president tweeted on Dec. 19, one of several tweets touting the event.

Another sponsor of the Jan. 6 rally was Turning Point Action, the political action committee arm of Turning Point USA, a campus right-wing group headed by activist Charlie Kirk. Turning Point spokesman Andrew Kolvet said the organization added its name to the event after Christmas, at the request of Women for America First. "We didn't organize the event. We sponsored it in as much as we helped students attend the rally and not the march," Kolvet said.

Turning Point Action sent seven buses carrying 350 students to the Jan. 6 rally, Kolvet said. The organization, he said, "condemns political violence."

Another group that joined with Women for America First to sponsor the protests was Stop the Steal, a network of activists who assembled in the immediate wake of President Trump's election defeat, to organize rallies around the nation against Biden's victory.



Police speak to supporters of President Donald Trump, including Jake Angeli (right), as they demonstrate on the second floor of the U.S. Capitol near the entrance to

the Senate after breaching security defenses, in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 6, 2021. REUTERS/Mike Theiler/File Photo

Mike Theiler

Women for America First brought on Stop the Steal as a sponsor, said Alex Bruesewitz, a conservative activist associated with Stop the Steal events. Stop the Steal set up a website that billed the event as a "Wild Protest," a reference to the Trump tweet, Bruesewitz said.

When crowds headed for the Capitol before Trump finished speaking on Wednesday, Bruesewitz said he decided the scene was chaotic and skipped the march.

"I am disheartened," Bruesewitz said in the aftermath of the storming of the Capitol. "No one wanted it to lead to this."

Ali Alexander, a leading Stop the Steal activist, has continued to publish violent rhetoric since the riots. On Sunday night, in a new Internet video, he vowed: "We are going to punish the traitors," referring to Republican politicians who endorsed Biden's electoral victory. "The Lord says vengeance is his, and I pray I am the tool to stab these motherf---ers."

Alexander did not respond to requests for comment.

After the riot, several websites promoting the march — including "Wild Protest" and "March to Save America" — went dark. But leaders of groups promoting the Jan. 6 rally showed no sign of conceding that Trump really did lose the election.

"Joe Biden will NEVER be my president," Amy Kremer, of Women for America First, tweeted on Saturday.

Additional reporting by Andrea Januta.

AO 91 (Rev. 11/11) Criminal Complaint

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

District of Columbia

United States of America
v.
JOSHUA PRUITT
[redacted] PDID: 671-733

Defendant(s)

Case: 1:21-MJ-00009
Assigned to: Judge G. Michael Harvey
Assigned Date: 1/7/2021
Description: COMPLAINT W/ ARREST WARRANT

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of January 6, 2021 in the county of _____ in the _____ District of Columbia, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section	*Offense Description*
18 U.S.C. 1752 (a)(1)	Knowingly Entering or Remaining in any Restricted Building or Grounds Without Lawful Authority

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See attached statement of facts.

☑ Continued on the attached sheet.

DH-1456

Complainant's signature

Detective Yaroslav Babich, MPD

Printed name and title

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1 by Telephone (specify reliable electronic means).

Date: 01/07/2021

G. Michael Harvey
2021.01.07 14:52:16
-05'00'

Judge's signature

City and state: Washington, D.C.

G. Michael Harvey, United States Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

Print Save As... Attach Reset

Case: 1:21-MJ-00009
Assigned to: Judge G. Michael Harvey
Assigned Date: 1/7/2021
Description: COMPLAINT W/ ARREST WARRANT

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On January 6, 2021, I was on duty and performing my official duties as a Detective with the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), specifically assigned to the Mass Processing center. I am authorized by law or by a Government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detention, investigation, or prosecution of a violation of Federal criminal laws.

On January 6, 2021, a joint session of the United States Congress convened at the United States Capitol, which is located at First Street, SE, in Washington, D.C. During the joint session, elected members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate were meeting in separate chambers of the United States Capitol to certify the vote count of the Electoral College of the 2020 Presidential Election, which had taken place on November 3, 2020. The joint session began at approximately 1:00 p.m. Vice President Mike Pence was present and presiding in the Senate chamber.

With the joint session underway and with Vice President Mike Pence presiding, a large crowd gathered outside the U.S. Capitol. Temporary and permanent barricades surround the exterior of the U.S. Capitol building, and U.S. Capitol Police were present and attempting to keep the crowd away from the Capitol building and the proceedings underway inside. At approximately 2:00 p.m., certain individuals in the crowd forced their way through, up, and over the barricades and officers of the U.S. Capitol Police, and the crowd advanced to the exterior façade of the building. At such time, the joint session was still underway and the exterior doors and windows of the U.S. Capitol were locked or otherwise secured. Members of the U.S. Capitol Police attempted to maintain order and keep the crowd from entering the Capitol; however, shortly after 2:00 p.m., individuals in the crowd forced entry into the U.S. Capitol, including by breaking windows. Shortly thereafter, at approximately 2:20 p.m. members of the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate, including the President of the Senate, Vice President Mike Pence, were instructed to—and did—evacuate the chambers. Accordingly, the joint session of the United States Congress was effectively suspended until shortly after 8:00 p.m. Vice President Pence remained in the United States Capitol from the time he was evacuated from the Senate Chamber until the session resumed.

District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser declared a public emergency in the District of Columbia (Mayor's Order 2021-001, pursuant to 24 DCMR § 2203.2.), which resulted in a District-wide curfew commencing at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 6, 2012 and ending at 6:00 a.m. on Thursday January 7, 2021.

At approximately 9:20 p.m. MPD officers made contact with a group of individuals to include Joshua PRUITT in the 1000 block of 14th St. NW, Washington, D.C. MPD Inspector J. Glover issued at least three warnings for PRUITT and the other individuals to disperse and go inside pursuant to the curfew. PRUITT and others did not comply and were then arrested pursuant to the curfew order.

After PRUITT was arrested and while being processed at the Mass Processing Center, MPD Investigator Emma Hicks noticed that PRUITT appeared to be an individual that Investigator Hicks observed in an open source image (currently on The Washington Post website) unlawfully

entering the United States Capitol earlier in the day. Upon review of the image, we confirmed that PRUITT appear to be the same individual depicted in the photograph, as he was wearing the same clothing, had the same facial features, hair style, facial hair, and tattoo. MPD Investigator Hicks and I proceeded to interview PRUITT.

We issued PRUITT his Miranda warnings and at approximately 12:16 a.m. on January 7, 2021; PRUITT waived his Miranda rights and elected to speak to us. During the interview, PRUITT identified himself as the person depicted in the photograph and stated that he entered the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021, after others had breached the Capitol. PRUITT further stated that while inside the Capitol, he did not engage in any unlawful activity and was only attempting to de-escalate others who had entered the Capitol.

I submit that there is probable cause to believe that PRUITT violated 18 U.S.C. § 1752(a), which makes it a crime to (1) knowingly enter or remain in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority to do; (2) knowingly, and with intent to impede or disrupt the orderly conduct of Government business or official functions, engage in disorderly or disruptive conduct in, or within such proximity to, any restricted building or grounds when, or so that, such conduct, in fact, impedes or disrupts the orderly conduct of Government business or official functions; (3) knowingly, and with the intent to impede or disrupt the orderly conduct of Government business or official functions, obstruct or impede ingress or egress to or from any restricted building or grounds; or attempts or conspires to do so. For purposes of Section 1752 of Title 18, a restricted building includes a posted, cordoned off, or otherwise restricted area of a building or grounds where the President or other person protected by the Secret Service is or will be temporarily visiting; or any building or grounds so restricted in conjunction with an event designated as a special event of national significance.

DII-1456

DETECTIVE YAROSLAV BABICH
METROPOLITAN POLICE
DEPARTMENT

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirement of Fed. R. Crim P. 4.1 by telephone this 7th day of January, 2021.

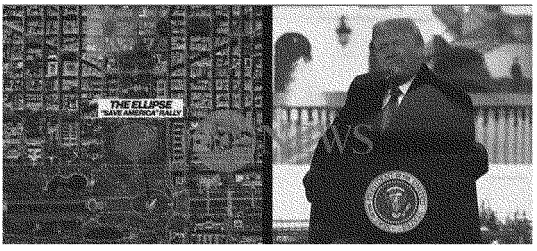
G. Michael Harvey
2021.01.07 14:52:44
-05'00'

G. MICHAEL HARVEY
U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE

A visual timeline on how the attack on Capitol Hill unfolded

Rioters from a Trump rally stormed the U.S. Capitol as Congress was in session.

By **Julia Jacobo**
January 10, 2021, 9:01 AM • 6 min read



US Capitol riots: Tracking the insurrection

On Jan. 6, rioters coming from a pro-Trump rally broke into the U.S. Capitol, resulting in deaths, i **Read More**

A rally in support of President Donald Trump turned deadly when thousands of of attendees stormed the U.S. Capitol building on Wednesday.

The unprecedented chaos in the nation's capital began midday Wednesday at a "Save America" rally at the Ellipse, a park near the White House, where Trump incited his supporters to march to Capitol Hill, where Congress was meeting to certify Joe Biden as the 46th president of the United States.



Roberto Schmidt/AFP via Getty Images

Trump supporters clash with police and security forces as they push barricades to storm theCapit.. **Read More**

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Jan 15, 6:00 AM

NY passenger bus hangs off overpass in the Bronx after crash, at least 8 injured
Jan 15, 12:00 AM

6 questions about Trump's 2nd impeachment trial answered, much still unknown
Jan 15, 5:00 AM

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24/7 coverage of breaking news and live events

Federal law enforcement vehicles raced to the Capitol in an effort to beat the mob there. Soon, after breaching through barricades and security checkpoints, the protesters were inside the building -- forcing lawmakers to go into lockdown.

+ 4 dead after US Capitol breached by pro-Trump mob during 'failed insurrection'

Members of the angry mob went door to door waving Confederate flags, looting the offices of senators and congressmen and repeating the false rhetoric that the president has spread since November -- that Trump was the real winner of the election.

Roberto Schmidt/AFP via Getty Images

*Supporters of US President Donald Trump protest inside the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, in W...*Read More

Lawmakers were forced to retrieve gas masks from under their seats as tear gas was released into the rotunda.

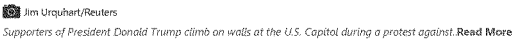

Andrew Harnik/AP

People shelter in the House gallery as protesters try to break into the House Chamber at the U.S... **Read More**

A woman was shot amid a standoff between police and protesters in a stairwell outside the House chamber. The woman, Ashli Babbitt, was one of four people who died as a result of the mayhem.

+ This is what Trump told supporters before many stormed Capitol Hill

As the minutes turned to hours of violence, politicians called on Trump to instruct his supporters to leave the Capitol. In a Twitter video that was later removed, Trump told them to go home, but repeated that the election was "stolen" from him and said he "loved" the protesters.



Jim Urquhart/Reuters

Supporters of President Donald Trump climb on walls at the U.S. Capitol during a protest against. **Read More**

People still remained in the Capitol minutes before the 6 p.m. curfew ordered by Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser began.

+ Timeline: How pro-Trump protesters stormed the Capitol

Senators returned to the session at 8 p.m. to confirm electoral votes, but the building was not deemed cleared until about 1:30 a.m., nearly 12 hours after the frenzy began.

For an expanded look into what happened at the Capitol riots watch the ABC News special, "24 Hours: Assault on the Capitol," exclusively on Hulu beginning in the evening on Jan. 11.

Comments (38)

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This is what Trump told supporters before many stormed Capitol Hill

abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-told-supporters-stormed-capitol-hill/story



The president incited those who attended his rally to march to the Capitol.

1:02

President Trump speaks at Save America Rally in Washington

The president addressed his supporters ahead of the Electoral College vote in Congress.

Jacquelyn Martin/AP
Many who participated in the chaos at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday came straight from an event held by President Donald Trump.

Trump's "Save America Rally" included the president telling supporters to "stop the steal" of the election, urging them to head to the Capitol to demonstrate against Congress certifying President-elect Joe Biden's victory. Among the crowd's battle cries was, "Fight for Trump! Fight for Trump! Fight for Trump!"

MORE: 4 dead after US Capitol breached by pro-Trump mob during 'failed insurrection'

Trump spoke at the event for nearly an hour at the Ellipse, a park near the White House. After he spoke, thousands of attendees, many of them without masks, marched toward Capitol Hill as federal law enforcement vehicles raced to beat them there.

Jose Luis Magana/AP
People attend a rally in support of President Donald Trump on Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington.

Here's what Trump said at his rally:

Media will not show the magnitude of this crowd even I when I turned on today, I looked, and I saw thousands of people here, but you don't see hundreds of thousands of people behind you because they don't want to show that. We have hundreds of thousands of people here, and I just want them to be recognized by the fake news media. Turn your cameras, please, and show what is really happening out here because these people are not going to take it any longer, they're not going to take it any longer.

Go ahead, turn your cameras, please. Would you show they came from all over the world actually, but they came from all over our country. I just really want to see what they do. I just want to see how they cover it. I've never seen anything like it, but it would be really great if we could be covered fairly by the media. The media is the biggest problem we have as far as I'm concerned single biggest problem.

The fake news and the big tech, big tech, is now coming into their own. We beat them four years ago, we surprised them. We took him by surprise and this year they rigged an election, they rigged it like they have never rigged an election before, and by the way, last night, they didn't do a bad job either, if you notice. I am honest, and I just again, I want to thank you. It's just a great honor to have this kind of crowd and to be before you and hundreds of thousands of American patriots who are committed to the honesty of our elections and the integrity of our glorious Republic.

All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by a bold and radical left Democrats which is what they are doing and stolen by the fake news media. That is what they have done and what they are doing. We will never give up. We will never concede. It doesn't happen. You don't concede when there's theft involved.

Our country has had enough. We will not take it anymore, and that is what this is all about.

And to use a favorite term that all of you people really came up with, we will stop the steal.

Today I will lay out just some of the evidence proving that we won this election and we won it by a landslide. This was not a close election. You know I say sometimes jokingly, but there's no joke about it. I have been into elections. I won them both and the second one I won much bigger than the first, okay?

Almost 75 million people voted for our campaign, the most of any incumbent president by far in the history of our country; 12 million more than four years ago.

And I was told by the real pollsters; we do have real pollsters. They know that we were going to do well and we were going to win. What I was told if I went from 63 million, which we had four years ago to 66 million, there was no chance of losing. Well, we didn't go to 66, we went to 75 million, and they say we lost. We didn't lose. And by the way, does anybody believe that Joe had 80 million votes? Does anybody believe that?

He had 80 million computer votes. It's a disgrace. There's never been anything like that. You can take third world countries just take a look take third world countries their elections are more honest than what we have been going through in this country. It's a disgrace. It's a disgrace. Even when you look at last night, they were all running around like chickens with their heads cut off with boxes, and nobody knows what the hell is going on. There's never been anything like this. We will not let them silence your voices. We're not going to let it happen.

Not going to let it happen.

CROWD: Fight for Trump. Fight for Trump. Fight for Trump. Fight for Trump. Fight for Trump. Fight for Trump.

TRUMP: Thank you.

John Minchillo/AP
Trump supporters participated in a rally, Jan. 6, 2021 in Washington. As Congress prepares to affirm President-elect Joe Biden's victory, thousands of people have gathered to show their support for President Donald Trump and his baseless claims of election fraud.

And I would love to have if those tens of thousands of people would be allowed the military, the Secret Service and we want to thank you and the police and law enforcement great you're doing a great job, but I would love it if they could be allowed to come up with us. Is that possible? Can you just let them, please? And Rudy, you did a great job.

He's got guts. You know what? he's got guts, unlike a lot of people in the Republican Party, he's got guts he fights, he fights. And I will tell you thank you very much, John, fantastic job. I watched--that's a tough act to follow those two. John is one of the most brilliant lawyers in the country and he looked at this, and he said what an absolute disgrace that this could be happening to our Constitution and he looked at Mike Pence, and I hope Mike is going to do the right thing. I hope so. I hope so because if Mike Pence does the right thing, we when the election.

All he has to do--all--this is--this is from the number one or certainly one of the top constitutional lawyers in our country he has the absolute right to do it; we're supposed to protect our country support our country, support our Constitution and protect our Constitution. States want to revote, the states got defrauded. They were given false information, they voted on it. Now they want to recertify; they want it back. All Vice President Pence has to do is send it back to the states to recertify, and we become president, and you are the happiest people.

And I actually I just spoke to Mike. I said, Mike, that doesn't take courage, what takes courage is to do nothing. That takes courage, and then we are stuck with a president who lost the election by a lot, and we have to live with that for four more years. We're just not going to let that happen. Many of you have traveled from all across the nation to be here, and I want to thank you for the extraordinary love. That is what it is; there's never been a movement like this ever, ever for the extraordinary love for this amazing country. And this amazing movement. Thank you.

By the way, this goes all the way back past the Washington Monument. Do you believe this? Look at this. Unfortunately, they gave the press the prime seats. I can't stand that. No, but you look at that behind. I wish they would flip those cameras and look behind you. That is the most amazing site.

When they make a mistake, you get to see it on television, amazing. Amazing. All of the way back and don't worry. We will not take the name off the Washington Monument. We will not. Cancel culture. They wanted to get rid of the Jefferson Memorial, either take it down or just put somebody else in there. I don't think that's going to happen. It damn well better not, even though with this administration if this happens, it could happen. You will see some really bad things happen. They will knock out Lincoln, too, by the way. They have been taking his statute down, but then we signed a little law you hurt our monuments, you hurt our heroes, you go to jail for ten years, and everything stopped. You notice that it stopped?

It all stopped, and they could use Rudy back in New York City, Rudy.

They could use you. Your city is going to hell. They want Rudy Giuliani back in New York. We will get a little younger version of Rudy. Is that okay, Rudy? We're gathered together in the heart of our nation's capital for one very, very basic and simple reason, to save our democracy.

You know most candidates on election evening, and of course, this thing goes on so long they still don't have any idea what the votes are. We still have congressional seats under review. They have no idea. They have totally lost control; they have used the pandemic as a way of defrauding the people in a proper election, but you know, you know when you see this and when you see what is happening number one they all say, sir, we will never let it happen again. I said that's good, but what about eight weeks ago?

You know they try and get you to go they say, sir, in four years you are guaranteed. I said I'm not interested right now. Do me a favor. Go back eight weeks. I want to go back eight weeks. Let's go back eight weeks.

We want to go back and we want to get this right because we're going to have somebody in there that should not be in there and our country will be destroyed and we're not going to stand for that.

For years, Democrats have gotten away with election fraud and weak Republicans. And that's what they are. There's so many weak Republicans. And we have great ones. Jim Jordan and some of these guys, they are out there fighting. The House guys are fighting, but it's--it's incredible. Many of the Republicans, I helped them get in. I helped them get elected. I helped Mitch get elected. I helped--

(BOOING)

MORE: Timeline: How pro-Trump protesters stormed the Capitol

I could name 24 of them, let's say. I won't bore you with it. And then all of a sudden, you have something like this. There is like oh, gee, maybe I'll talk to the president sometime later. No, it's amazing. The weak Republicans. They're pathetic Republicans, and that's what happens.

If this happened to the Democrats, there'd be held all over the country going on. There'd be hell all over the country. But just remember this, you're stronger, you're smarter. You've got more going than anybody and they try and demean everybody having to do with us and you're the real people. You're the people that built this nation. You're not the people that tore down our nation.

The weak Republicans--and that's it, I really believe it. I think I'm going to use the term. The weak Republicans. You've got a lot of them and you've got a lot of great ones. But you've got a lot of weak ones. They've turned a blind eye.

Even as Democrats enacted policies that shipped away our jobs, weakend our military, threw open our borders, and put America last. Did you see the other day where Joe Biden said I want to get rid of the America first policy. What's that all about? Get rid of--how do you say I want to get rid of America first? Even if you're going to do it, don't talk about it, right?

Unbelievable, what we have to go through. What we have to go through--and you have to get your people to fight. And if they don't fight, we have to primary the hell out of the ones that don't fight. We primary them.

We're going to--we're going to let you know who they are. I can already tell you, frankly. But this year, using the pretext of the China virus and the scam of mail in ballots, Democrats attempted the most brazen and outrageous election theft. And there's never been anything like this. It's a pure theft in American history. Everybody knows it.

That election, our election was over at 10:00 in the evening. We're leading Pennsylvania, Michigan, Georgia. By hundreds of thousands of votes and then late in the evening or early in the morning, boom. These explosions of bull---- and all of the sudden--

All of a sudden, it started to happen.

Don't forget, when Romney got beat--Romney. Did you see his--

I wonder if he enjoyed his flight in last night.

But when Romney got beat, you know, he stands up like your more typical--well, I'd like to congratulate the victor. The victor. Who was the victor, Mitt? I'd like to congratulate. They don't go in and look at the facts. Oh, I don't know. You've got--he got slaughtered, probably. Maybe it was okay, maybe it was--that's what happened.

But we look at the facts and our election was so corrupt that in the history of this country, we've never seen anything like it. You could go all the way back. You know, America is blessed with elections. All over the world they talk about our elections. You know what the world's says about us now? They said we don't have free and fair elections.

And you know what else? We don't have a free and fair press. Our media is not free, it's not fair. It's suppresses thought. It suppresses speech, and it's become the enemy of the people. It's become the enemy of the people. It's a--it's the biggest problem we have in this country. No third world countries would even attempt to do what we caught them doing. And you'll hear about that in just a few minutes. Republicans are--

Republicans are constantly fighting like a boxer with his hands tied behind his back. It's like a boxer. And we want to be so nice. We want to be so respectful of everybody, including bad people. And we're going to have to fight much harder. And Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us. And if he doesn't, that will be a sad day for our country because you're sworn to uphold our constitution.

Now it is up to Congress to confront this egregious assault on our democracy. And after this, we're going to walk down and I'll be there with you. We're going to walk down--

We're going to walk down. Anyone you want, but I think right here, we're going to walk down to the Capitol--

And we're going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women and we're probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them.

Because you'll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength and you have to be strong.

We have come to demand that Congress do the right thing and only count the electors who have been lawfully slated. Lawfully slated.

I know that everyone here will soon be marching over to the Capitol building to peacefully and patriotically make your voices heard. Today, we will see whether Republicans stand strong for integrity of our elections. But whether or not they stand strong for our country, our country. Our country has been under siege for a long time. Far longer than this four year period.

John Minchillo/AP
Trump supporters participated in a rally, Jan. 6, 2021 in Washington. As Congress prepares to affirm President-elect Joe Biden's victory, thousands of people have gathered to show their support for President Donald Trump and his baseless claims of election fraud.

We set it on a much straighter course, a much--and we--I thought, you know, four more years. I thought it would be easy. We created the greatest economy in history. We rebuilt our military. We get you the biggest tax cuts in history, right? We got the biggest regulation cuts. There is no president, whether it's four years, eight years, or in one case more got anywhere near the regulation cuts.

It used to take 20 years to get hey highway approved. Now we're down to two. I want to get it down to one, but we're down to two. And it may get rejected for environmental or safety reasons, but we got it down, the safety. We created Space Force. We--and look what we did. Our military has been totally rebuilt. So we create Space Force, which by and of itself is a major achievement for an administration. And with us, it's one of so many different things.

Right to try. Everybody know about right to try. We did things that nobody ever thought possible. We took care of our vets. Our vets. The VA now has the highest rating. 91 percent. The highest rating that it's had from the beginning. 91 percent approval rate rating. Always, you watch the VA. It was on television. Every night, people living in a horrible, horrible manner. We got that done and we got accountability done.

We got it so that now in the VA, you don't have to wait for four weeks, six weeks, eight weeks, four months to see a doctor. If you can't get a doctor, you go outside, you get the doctor, you have him taken care of, and we pay the doctor. And we've not only made life wonderful for so many people, we've saved tremendous amounts of money far, secondarily. But we've saved a lot of money.

And now we have the right to fire bad people in the VA. We had 9,000 people they treated our veterans horribly. In prime time, they would not have treated our veterans badly. But they treated our veterans horribly and we have what's called the account--VA Accountability Act. And the accountability says if we see somebody in there that doesn't treat our vets well or they steal, they rob, they do things badly, we say Joe, you're fired. Get out of here.

Before, you couldn't do that. You couldn't do that before. So we've taken care of things. We've done things like nobody's ever thought possible, and that's part of the reason that many people don't like us because we've done too much. But we've done it quickly.

And we were going to sit home and watch a big victory and everybody had us down for a victory. It was going to be great. And now we're out here fighting. I said to somebody I was going to take a few days and relax after our big electoral victory. 10:00, it was over and I was going to take a few days.

And I can say this. Since our election, I believe--which was such a catastrophe when I watched, and even these guys knew what happened. They know what happened. They're saying wow. Pennsylvania is insurmountable. Wow. Wisconsin. Look at the big leads we had, right?

Even you know, the press said we're going to lose Wisconsin by 17 points. Even though the press said Ohio's going to be close, we set a record. Florida's going to be close. We set a record. Texas is going to be close.

Texas is going to be close. We set a record. And, we set a record with Hispanic, with the black community. We set a record with everybody.

Today, we see a very important event, though, because right over there, right there, we see the event that's going to take place and I'm going to be watching because history is going to be made. We're going to see whether or not we have great and courageous leaders or whether or not we have leaders that should be ashamed of themselves throughout history, throughout eternity. They'll be ashamed.

And, you know what? If they do the wrong thing, we should never, ever forget that they did. Never forget.

We should never, ever forget. With only three of the seven states in question, we win the presidency of the United States. And, by the way, it's much more important today than it was 24 hours ago because--and don't-- I spoke to David Perdue. What a great person. And, Kelly Loeffler, two great people.

But, it was a setup and you know, I said we have no backline anymore. The only backline, the only line of demarcation, the only line that we have is the veto of the president of the United States. So, this is now, what we're doing, a far more important election than it was two days ago.

I want to thank the more than 140 members of the House. Those are warriors. They're over there working like you've never seen before, studying, talking, actually going all the way back studying the roots of the Constitution because they know we have the right to send a bad vote that was illegally gotten.

They gave these people bad things to vote for and they voted because what did they know. And, then when they found out a few weeks later, again, it took them four years to devise this great--and the only unhappy person in the United States, single most unhappy, is Hillary Clinton because she said, "Why didn't you do this for me four years ago?"

"Why didn't you do this for me four years ago? Change the votes, 10,000 in Michigan. You could have changed the whole thing." But, she's not too happy. You notice, she--you don't see her anymore. What happened? Where's Hillary? Where is she?

But, I want to thank all of those congressmen and women. I also want to thank our 13 most courageous members of the U.S. Senate, Senator Ted Cruz, Senator Ron Johnson--

--Senator Josh Hawley, Kelly Loeffler. And, Kelly Loeffler, I'll tell you, she has been--she has been so great. She works so hard, so let's give her and David a little special hand, because it was rigged against them. Let's give her and David--Kelly Loeffler, David Perdue.

They fought a good race. They never had a shot. That equipment should never have been allowed to be used. And, I was telling these people, "Don't let them use this stuff." Marsha Blackburn, terrific person, Mike Braun, Indiana, Steve Daines, great guy, Bill Hagerty, John Kennedy, James Lankford, Cynthia Lummis, Tommy Tuberville, the coach, and Roger Marshall. We want to thank them. Senators have stepped up. We want to thank them.

I actually think, though, it takes, again, more courage not to step up and I think a lot of those people are going to find that out. And, you better start looking at your leadership because your leadership has led you down the tubes.

You know, "We don't want to give $2,000 to people. We want to give them $600." Oh, great. How does that play politically? Pretty good? And, this has nothing to do with politics, but how does it play politically?

China destroyed these people. We didn't destroy them. China destroyed them, totally destroyed them. "We want to give them $600," and they just wouldn't change. I said, "Give them $2,000, we'll pay it back, we'll pay it back fast. You already owe $26 trillion. Give them a couple of bucks. Let them live. Give them a couple of bucks."

And, some of the people here disagree with me on that, but I--I just say, look, you've got to let people live. And, how does that play, though? Okay, number one, it's the right thing to do. But, how does that play politically?

I think it's the primary reason--one of the primary reasons, the other was just pure cheating. That was the primary--super primary reason. But, you can't do that. You've got to use your head.

As you know, the media has constantly asserted the outrageous lie that there was no evidence of widespread fraud. You ever see these people? "While there's no evidence of fraud." Oh, really? Well, I'm going to read you pages. I hope you don't get bored listening to it. Promise? Don't get bored listening to it, all those hundreds of thousands of people back there.

Move them up, please. Yeah. All they--all these people, don't get bored. Don't get angry at me because you're going to get bored, because it's so much. The American people do not believe the corrupt fake news anymore. They have ruined their reputation.

But, you know, it used to be that they'd argue with me. I'd fight. So, I'd fight, they'd fight, I'd fight, they'd fight, bump, bump, you'd believe me, you'd believe them. Somebody comes out. You know, they had their point of view, I had my point of view. But, you'd have an argument.

Now, what they do is they go silent. It's called suppression and that's what happens in a communist country. That's what they do. They suppress. You don't fight with them anymore unless it's a bad story. If they have a little bad story about me, they make it ten times worse and it's a major headline.

But, Hunter Biden, they don't talk about him. What happened to Hunter? Where's Hunter? Where is Hunter? They don't talk about him.

Now, watch, all the sets will go off. Well, they can't do that because they get good ratings. Their ratings are too good.

Now, where's Hunter, you know? And--and how come Joe was allowed to give $1 billion of money to get rid of the prosecutor in Ukraine? How does that happen? I'd ask you that question. How does that happen?

Can you imagine if I said that? If I said that, it would be a whole different ballgame. And, how come Hunter gets 3 and a half million dollars from the mayor of Moscow's wife and gets hundreds of thousands of dollars to sit on an energy board even though he admits he has no knowledge of energy and millions of dollars upfront? And, how come they go into China and they leave with billions of dollars to manage?

"Have you managed money before?" "No, I haven't." "Oh, that's good, here's about $3 billion."

No, they don't talk about that. No, we have a corrupt media. They've gone silent. They've gone dead. I now realize how good it was, if you go back ten years. I realize how good--even though I didn't necessarily love them, I realize how good--it was like a cleansing motion, right?

But, we don't have that anymore. We don't have a fair media anymore. It's suppression and you have to be very careful with that, and they've lost all credibility in this country.

We will not be intimidated into accepting the hoaxes and the lies that we've been forced to believe. Over the past several weeks, we've amassed overwhelming evidence about a fake election. This is the presidential election. Last night was a little bit better because of the fact that we had a lot of eyes watching one specific state, but they cheated like hell anyway. You have one of the dumbest governors in the United States.

And, you know, when I endorsed him at--I didn't know this guy--at the request of David Perdue. He said, "A friend of mine is running for governor," "What's his name?" and you know the rest. He was in fourth place, fifth place. I don't know, he was way--he was doing poorly. I endorsed him. He went like a rocket ship and he won.

And, then I had to beat Stacey Abrams with this guy, Brian Kemp. I had to beat Stacey Abrams and I had to beat Oprah, used to be a friend of mine. You know, I was on her last show, her last week. She picked the five outstanding people. I don't think she thinks that anymore.

Once I ran for president, I didn't notice too many calls coming in from Oprah. Believe it or not, she used to like me. But, I was one of the five outstanding people and I had to campaign against Michelle Obama and Barack Hussein Obama, against Stacey.

And, I had Brian Kemp who weighs 130 pounds. He said he played offensive line in football. I'm trying to figure that out. I'm still trying to figure that out. He said that the other night. "I was an offensive lineman." I'm saying, "Really? That must have been a very small team."

But, I look at that and I look at what's happened and he turned out to be a disaster. This stuff happens. You know, look, I'm not happy with the Supreme Court. They love to rule against me. I picked three people. I fought like hell for them. One in particular I fought.

They all said, "Sir, cut him loose, he's killing the senators." You know, very loyal senators. They're very loyal people.

Sir, cut him loose. He is killing us, sir. Cut him loose, sir. I will never--I must have gotten half of these senators. I said no, I can't do that. It's unfair to him, and it's unfair to the family. He didn't do anything wrong. They made up stories. They were all made up stories. He didn't do anything wrong. Cut him loose, sir. I said no, I won't do that. We got him through, and you know what, they couldn't give a damn. They couldn't give a damn. Let him rule the right way, but it almost seems that they are all going out of their way to hurt all of us and to hurt our country, to hurt our country.

You know I read a story in one of the newspapers recently how I control the three Supreme Court justices. I control them. They are puppets. I read it about Bill Barr that he is my personal attorney, that he will do anything for me and I said you know it really is genius because what they do is that and it makes it really impossible for them to ever give you a victory because all of the sudden Bill Barr changed if you hadn't noticed. I like Bill Barr, but he changed because he didn't want to be considered my personal attorney.

And the Supreme Court they rule against me so much do you know why because the story is I haven't spoken to any of them, any of them since virtually they got in, but the story is that they are my puppet, right? That they are puppets, and now the only way they can get out of that because they hate that; it's not good on the social circuit, and the only way they get out is to rule against Trump, so let's rule against Trump, and they do that. So I want to congratulate

them, but it shows you the media is genius. In fact, probably if I was the media, I would do it the same way I hate to say it, but we have got to get them straightened out. Today for the sake of our democracy, for the sake of our Constitution, and for the sake of our children, we lay out the case for the entire world to hear. You want to hear it?

In every single swing state local officials, state officials almost all Democrats made illegal and unconstitutional changes to election procedures without the mandated approvals by the state legislatures that these changes paved the way for fraud on a scale never seen before, and I think we would go a long way outside of our country when I say that. So just in a nutshell, you can't make a change on voting for a federal election unless the state legislature approves it. No judge can do it; nobody can do it, only a legislature.

So as an example, in Pennsylvania or whatever, you have a Republican legislature, you have a Democrat mayor, and you have a lot of Democrats all over the place; they go to the legislature, the legislature laughs at them says we're not going to do that they say thank you very much and they go and make the changes themselves, they do it anyway, and that is totally illegal, that is totally illegal. You can't do that.

In Pennsylvania, the Democrat secretary of state and the Democrat state Supreme Court justices illegally abolished the signature verification requirements just 11 days prior to the election. So think of what they did. No longer is there signature verification. That's okay. We want voter ID, by the way, but no longer is there signature verification. 11 days before the election, they say we don't want it. Do you know why they don't want them? Because they want to cheat, that's the only reason. Who would even think of that? We don't want to verify a signature.

There were over 205,000 more ballots counted in Pennsylvania. Now think of this, you had 205,000 more ballots than you had voters. That means you had to--where did they come from? Do you know where they came from? Somebody's imagination whatever they need it. So in Pennsylvania, you had 205,000 more votes than you had voters, and it's--the number is actually much greater than that now. That was as of a week ago, and this is a mathematical impossibility unless you want to say it's a total fraud. So if Pennsylvania was defrauded.

Over 8,000 ballots in Pennsylvania were cast by people whose names and dates of birth match individuals who died in 2020 and prior to the election. Think of that. Dead people, lots of dead people, thousands, and some dead people actually requested an application. That bothers me even more. Not only are they voting, they want an application to vote; one of them was 29 years ago died. It's incredible.

Over 14,000 ballots were cast by out-of-state voters, so these are voters that don't live in the state, and by the way, these numbers are what they call outcome-determinative, meaning these numbers far surpass--I lost by a very little bit. These numbers are massive, massive. More than 10,000 votes in Pennsylvania were illegally counted even though they were

received after election day. In other words, they were received after election day. Let's count them anyway and what they did in many cases is they did fraud, they took the date, and they moved it back so that it no longer is after election day.

And more than 60,000 ballots in Pennsylvania were reported received back, they got back before they were ever supposedly mailed out. In other words, you got the ballot back before you mailed it, which is also logically and logistically impossible, right? Think of that one. You got that ballot back. Let's send the ballots. Oh, they've already been sent. But we got the ballot back before they were sent. I don't think that's too good, right?

25,000 ballots in Pennsylvania were requested by nursing home residents, all in a single giant batch, not legal, indicating an enormous illegal ballot harvesting operation. You are not allowed to do it. It's against the law. The day before the election, the state of Pennsylvania reported the number of absentee ballots that had been sent out, yet this number was suddenly and drastically increased by 400,000 people. It was increased; nobody knows where it came from by 400,000 ballots one day after the election. It remains totally unexplained. They said, well, we can't figure that. Now that's many, many times what it would take to overthrow the state, just that one element, 400,000 ballots appeared from nowhere right after the election.

By the way, Pennsylvania has now seen all of this. They didn't know because it was so quick they had a vote, they voted, but now they see all of this stuff, it has all come to light. It doesn't happen that fast. And they want to recertify their votes. They want them recertified, but the only way that can happen is if Mike Pence agrees to send it back. Mike Pence has to agree to send it back.

Send it back. Send it back. Send it back. Send it back. Send it back. Send it back.

And many people in Congress want it sent back. Think of what you are doing. Let's say you don't do it somebody says well, we have to obey the Constitution and you are because you are protecting our country, and you are protecting the Constitution, so you are but think of what happens.

Let's say there are stiffs and they are stupid people and they say well, we really have no choice even though Pennsylvania and other states want to redo their votes, they want to see the numbers, they only have the numbers go very quickly and they want to redo their legislature because many of these votes were taken as I said because it wasn't approved by their legislature you know that in itself is legal and then you have the scam and that is all of the things that we are talking about.

MORE: Biden to Trump: 'Demand an end to this siege'
But think of this if you don't do that that means you will have a president of the United States for four years with his wonderful son, you will have a president who lost all of these states, or you will have a president to put it another way who was voted on by a bunch of stupid people

who lost all of these states. You will have an illegitimate president. That is what you will have, and we can't let that happen. These are the facts that you won't hear from the fake news media. It's all part of the suppression effort. They don't want to talk about it. They don't want to talk about it.

In fact, when I started talking about that, I guarantee you a lot of the television sets and a lot of those cameras went off, and that's a lot of cameras back there. But a lot of them went off, but these are the things you don't hear about, you don't hear what you just heard, and I'm going to go over a few more states, but you don't hear of the people who want to deceive you and demoralize you and control you big tech media just like the suppression polls that said we are going to lose Wisconsin by 17 points. Well, we won Wisconsin. They don't have it that way because they just buy a little sliver, but they had me down the day before. Washington Post ABC poll down 17 points. I called up a real pollster. I said, what is that? Sir, that's called a suppression poll.

I think you are going to win Wisconsin, sir. I said, "But why don't they make it four or five points," because then people vote. But when you're down 17, they say hey, I'm not going to waste my time. I love the president, but there's no way. Despite that--Despite that, we won Wisconsin. It's going to see--I mean, you'll see.

But that's called suppression because a lot of people when they see that--it's very interesting. This pollster said, "Sir, if you're down three, four, five people vote. When you go down 17, they say let's save--let's go and have dinner and let's watch the presidential defeat tonight on television, darling."

And just like the radical left tries to blacklist you on social media--every time I put out a tweet that's--even if it's totally correct, totally correct, I get a flag. I get a flag. And they also don't let you get out. You know, on Twitter, it's very hard to come on to my account. It's very hard to get out a message. They don't let the message get out nearly like they should.

But I've had many people say I can't get on your Twitter. I don't care about Twitter. Twitter is bad news. They are all bad news. But you know what? If you want to--if you want to get out a message and if you want to go through big tech, social media, they are really--if you're a conservative, if you're a Republican, if you have a big voice, I guess they call it shadow ban, right? Shadow ban. They shadow ban you and it should be illegal. I've been telling these Republicans get rid of Section 230.

And for some reason, Mitch and the group, they don't want to put it in there and they don't realize that that's going to be the end of the Republican Party as we know it, but it's never going to be the end of us. Never.

Let them get out. Let--let the weak ones get out. This is a time for strength. They also want to indoctrinate your children in school by teaching them things that aren't so. They want to indoctrinate your children. It's all part of a comprehensive assault on our democracy and the

American people are finally standing up and saying no. This crowd is, again, a testament to it.

I did no advertising. I did nothing. You do have some groups that are big supporters. I want to thank that. Amy and everybody. We have some incredible supporters. Incredible. But we didn't do anything. This just happened. Two months ago, we had a massive crowd come down to Washington. I said what are they there for? Sir, they're there for you. We had nothing to do with it.

These groups are formed--they're forming all over the United States. And we've got to remember, in a year from now, you're going to start working on Congress and we've got to get rid of the week congresspeople, the ones that aren't any good, the Liz Cheney's of the world. We've got to get rid of them. We've got to get rid.

You know, she never wants a soldier brought home. 20--I brought a lot of our soldiers home. I don't know. Some might like it. They're in countries that nobody even knows the name. Nobody knows where they are. They're dying. They're great, but they're dying. They are losing their arms, their legs, their face. I brought them back home. Largely back home.

Afghanistan, Iraq. Remember I used to say in the old days, don't go in Iraq. But if you go in, keep the oil. We didn't keep the oil. So stupid. So stupid, these people. And Iraq has billions and billions of dollars now in the bank. And what did we do? We did get nothing. We never get--but we do, actually. We kept the oil here. We kept--we did good.

We got rid of the ISIS caliphate. We got rid of plenty of different things. Everybody knows and the rebuilding of our military in three years, people said it couldn't be done and it was all made in the USA. All made in the USA. Best equipment in the world.

In Wisconsin, corrupt, Democrat run cities deployed more than 500 illegal unmanned, unsecured drop boxes, which collected a minimum of 91,000 unlawful votes. It was razor thin, the loss. This one thing alone is much more than we would need, but there are many things.

They have these lock boxes. And you know, they pick them up and they disappear for two days. People would say where's that box? They'd disappeared. Nobody even knew where the hell it was. In addition, over 170,000 absentee votes were counted in Wisconsin without a valid absentee ballot application. So they had a vote, but they had no application and that's illegal in Wisconsin. Meaning, those votes were blatantly done in opposition to state law and they came 100 percent from Democrat areas such as Milwaukee and Madison. 100 percent.

In Madison, at 17,000 votes were deposited in so called human drop boxes. You know what that is, right? Where operatives stuff thousands of unsecured ballots into duffel bags on park benches across the city in complete defiance of cease and desist letters from state legislature. The state legislatures said don't do it. They're the only ones that could approve it.

They gave tens of thousands of votes. They came in duffel bags. Where the hell did they come from? According to eyewitness testimony, Postal Service workers in Wisconsin were also instructed to illegally backdate approximately 100,000 ballots. The margin of difference in Wisconsin was less than 20,000 votes. Each one of these things alone wins us the state. Great state. We love the state. We won the state.

In Georgia, your secretary of state who I can't believe this guy is a Republican. He loves recording telephone conversations. You know, that was a--I thought it was a great conversation, personally. So did a lot of other--people love that conversation because it says what's going on. These people are crooked. They are 100 percent--in my opinion, one of the most corrupt.

Jacquelyn Martin/AP
President Donald Trump arrives to speak at a rally Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington D.C.

Between your governor and your secretary of state and now you have it again last night. Just take a look at what happened. What a mess. And the Democrat party operators operatives entered into an illegal and unconstitution--unconstitutional settlement agreement that drastically weakens signature verification and other election security procedures.

Stacey Abrams. She took them to lunch. And I beat her two years ago with a bad candidate, Brian Kemp. But they took--the Democrats took the Republicans to lunch because the secretary of state had no clue what the hell was happening unless he did have a clue. That's interesting. Maybe he was with the other side.

But we've been trying to get verifications of signatures in Fulton County. They won't let us do it. The only reason they won't is because we'll find things in the hundreds of thousands. Why wouldn't they let us verify signatures at Fulton County, which is known for being very corrupt? They won't do it. They go to some other County where you would live.

I said that's not the problem. The problem is Fulton County, home of Stacey Abrams. She did a good job. I congratulate her, but it was done in such a way that we can't let this stuff happen. We won't have a country if it happens. As a result, Georgia's absentee ballot rejection rate was more than 10 times lower than previous levels because the criteria was so off.

48 counties in Georgia with thousands and thousands of votes rejected zero ballots. There wasn't one ballot. In other words, in a year in which more mail in ballots were sent than ever before and more people were voting by mail for the first time, their rejection rate was drastically lower than it had ever been before.

The only way this can be explained as if tens of thousands of illegitimate votes were added to the tally. That's the only way you could explain it. By the way, you're talking about tens of thousands. If Georgia had merely rejected the same number of unlawful ballots as in other

years, there should have been approximately 45,000 ballots projected. Far more than what we needed to win, just over 11,000. They should find those votes. They should absolutely find that. Just over 11,000 votes. That's all we need.

They defrauded us out of a win in Georgia. And we are not going to forget it. There's only one reason the Democrats could possibly want to eliminate signature matching, oppose voter ID, and stop citizenship confirmation. Are you a citizen? You're not allowed to ask that question. Because they want to steal the election.

The radical left knows exactly what they were doing. They are ruthless and it's time that somebody did something about it. And Mike Pence, I hope you're going to stand up for the good of our constitution and for the good of our country.

And if you're not, I'm going to be very disappointed in you. I will tell you right now. I'm not hearing good stories.

In Fulton County, Republican poll watchers rejected in some cases physically, the individuals whose names and dates of birth match incarcerated felons in Georgia prison, people who are not allowed to vote. More than 4,500 illegal ballots were cast by individuals who do not appear on the state's own voter rolls. Over 18,000 illegal ballots were cast by individuals who registered to vote using an address listed as vacant according to the postal service.

At least 88,000 ballots in Georgia were cast by people whose registrations were illegally backdated. Sixty-six thousand votes--each one of these is far more than we need. Sixty-six thousand votes in Georgia were cast by individuals under the legal voting age and at least 15,000 ballots were cast by individuals who moved out of the state prior to November 3rd election. They say they moved right back.

They move right back. Oh, they moved out, they moved right back, okay. They missed Georgia that much? I do, I love Georgia, but it's a corrupt system.

Despite all of this, the margin in Georgia is only 11,779 votes. Each and every one of these issues is enough to give us a victory in Georgia, a big beautiful victory. Make no mistake, this election was stolen from you, from me, and from the country, and not a single swing state has conducted a comprehensive audit to remove the illegal ballots. This should absolutely occur in every single contested state before the election is certified.

In the state of Arizona, over 36,000 ballots were illegally cast by non-citizens. Two thousand ballots were returned with no address. More than 22,000 ballots were returned before they were ever supposedly mailed out. They returned, but we haven't mailed them yet. 11,600 more ballots and votes were counted more than there were actual voters. You see that?

So, you have more votes, again, than you have voters. 150,000 people registered in Maricopa County after the registration deadline. 103,000 ballots in the county were sent for electronic adjudication with no Republican observers.

In Clark County Nevada, the accuracy settings on signature verification machines were purposefully lowered before they were used to count over 130,000 ballots. If you signed your name as Santa Claus, it would go through.

There were also more than 42,000 double votes in Nevada. Over 150,000 people were hurt so badly by what took place and 1,500 ballots were cast by individuals whose names and dates of birth match Nevada residents who died in 2020 prior to November 3rd election. More than 8,000 votes were cast by individuals who had no address and probably didn't live there.

The margin in Nevada is down at a very low number. Any of these things would have taken care of the situation. We would have won Nevada also. Every one of these we're going over, we win.

In Michigan, quickly, the secretary of state, a real great one, flooded the state with unsolicited mail-in ballot applications sent to every person on the rolls in direct violation of state law. More than 17,000 Michigan ballots were cast by individuals whose names and dates of birth match people who were deceased.

In Wayne County, that's a great one. That'd Detroit--174,000 ballots were counted without being tied to an actual registered voter. Nobody knows where they came from. Also in Wayne County, poll watches observed canvassers rescanning batches of ballots over and over again up to three or four or five times.

In Detroit turnout was 139 percent of registered voters. Think of that. So, you had 139 percent of the people in Detroit voting. This is in Michigan, Detroit Michigan. A career employee of the Detroit--City of Detroit testified under penalty of perjury that she witnessed city workers coaching voters to vote straight democrat while accompanying them to watch who they voted for. When a Republican came in, they wouldn't talk to them.

The same worker was instructed not to ask for any voter ID and not to attempt to validate any signatures if they were Democrats. She also told to illegally and was told backdate ballots, received after the deadline and reports of thousands and thousands of ballots were improperly backdated.

That's Michigan. Four witnesses have testified under penalty of perjury that after officials in Detroit announced the last votes had been counted, tens of thousands of additional ballots arrived without required envelopes. Every single one was for a Democrat. I got no votes.

At 6:31 AM in the early morning hours after voting had ended, Michigan suddenly reported 147,000 votes. An astounding 94 percent went to Joe Biden who campaigned brilliantly from his basement. Only a couple of percentage points went to Trump.

Such gigantic and one sided vote dumps were only observed in a few swing states and they were observed in the states where it was necessary--you know what's interesting? President Obama beat Biden in every state other than the swing states where Biden killed them, but the swing states were the ones that mattered.

They're always just enough to push Joe Biden barely into the lead. We were ahead by a lot and within a number of hours, we were losing by a little.

In addition, there is the highly troubling matter of Dominion voting systems. In one Michigan County alone, 6,000 votes were switched from Trump to Biden and the same systems are used in the majority of states in our country.

Senator William Ligon, a great gentleman, Chairman of Georgia Senate Judiciary Subcommittee, Senator Ligon, highly respected, on elections has written a letter describing his concerns with Dominion in Georgia.

He wrote, and I quote, "The Dominion voting machines employed in Fulton County had an astronomical and astounding 93.67 percent error rate." It's only wrong 93 percent of the time in the scanning of ballots requiring a review panel to adjudicate or determine the voters' interest in over 106,000 ballots out of a total of 113,000.

Think of it, you go in and you vote and then they tell people who you're supposed to be voting for. They make up whatever they want. Nobody's ever even heard. They adjudicate your vote. They say, "Well, we don't think Trump wants to vote for Trump. We think he wants to vote for Biden. Put it down for Biden."

The national average for such an error rate is far less than 1 percent and yet you're at 93 percent. The source of this astronomical error rate must be identified to determine if these machines were set up or destroyed to allow for a third party to disregard the actual ballot cast by the registered voter.

The letter continues, "There is clear evidence that tens of thousands of votes were switched from President Trump to former Vice President Biden in several counties in Georgia." For example, in Bibb County, President Trump was reported to have 29,391 votes at 9:11 PM eastern time while simultaneously, Vice President Joe Biden was reported to have 17,213.

Minutes later, just minutes, at the next update, these vote numbers switched with President Trump going way down to 17,000 and Biden going way up to 29,391. And, that was very quick, a 12,000 vote switch all in Mr. Biden's favor.

So, I mean, I could go on and on about this fraud that took place in every state and all of these legislators want this back. I don't want to do it to you because I love you and it's freezing out here.--

--But, I could just go on forever. I can tell you this--

So, when you hear--when you hear, "While there is no evidence to prove any wrongdoing," this is the most fraudulent thing anybody's--this is a criminal enterprise. This is a criminal enterprise and--and the press will say, and I'm sure they won't put any of that on there because that's no good and did you ever see while there is no evidence to back President Trump's assertion--I could go on for another hour reading this stuff to you and telling you about it.

There's never been anything like it. Think about it. Detroit had more votes than it had voters. Pennsylvania had 205,000 more votes than it had more--but you don't have to go--between that, I think that's almost better than dead people if you think, right? More votes than they had voters and many other states also. It's a disgrace that the United States of America, tens of millions of people are allowed to go vote without so much as even showing identification. In no state is there any question or effort made to verify the identity, citizenship, residency, or eligibility of the votes cast.

The Republicans have to get tougher. You're not going to have a Republican party if you don't get tougher. They want to play so straight; they want to play so serious the United States, the Constitution doesn't allow me to send them back to the states. Well, I would say yes, it does because the Constitution says you have to protect our country, and you have to protect our Constitution, and you can't vote on fraud, and fraud breaks up everything, doesn't it? When you catch somebody in a fraud, you are allowed to go by very different rules. So I hope Mike has the courage to do what he has to do, and I hope he doesn't listen to the RINOs and the stupid people that he's listening to.

It is also widely understood that the voter rolls are crammed full of noncitizens, felons, and people who have moved out of state, and individuals who are otherwise ineligible to vote, yet Democrats oppose every effort to clean up their voter rolls. They don't want to clean them up. They are loaded, and how many people here are--know other people that when hundreds of thousands and then millions of ballots got sent out got three, four, five, six and I heard one who got seven ballots, and then they say you didn't quite make it, sir. We won in a landslide. This was a landslide.

They said it's not American to challenge the election. This is the most corrupt election in the history, maybe in the world. You know you could go to third world countries, but I don't think they had hundreds of thousands of votes, and they don't have voters for them. I mean, no matter where you go, nobody would think this. In fact, it's so egregious, it's so bad that a lot of people don't even believe it. It is so crazy that people don't even believe it. It can't be true. So they don't believe it.

This is not just a matter of domestic politics; this is a matter of national security. So today, in addition to challenging the certification of the election, I'm calling on Congress and the state legislatures to quickly pass sweeping election reforms, and you had better do it before we have no country left. Today is not the end; it's just the beginning.

With your help over the last four years, we built the greatest political movement in the history of our country, and nobody even challenges that. I say that over and over, and I never get challenged by the fake news, and they challenge almost everything we say. But our fight against the big donors, big media, big tech, and others is just getting started.

This is the greatest in history; there's never been a movement like that. You look back, there are all of the way to the Washington Monument. It's hard to believe. We must stop the steal, and then we must ensure that such outrageous election fraud never happens again, can never be allowed to happen again, but we are going forward; we will take care of it going forward. We have got to take care of going back.

Don't let them talk, okay, well, we promise. I have had a lot of people, sir, you are at 96 percent for four years. I said I'm not interested right now. I'm interested in right there. With your help, we will finally pass powerful requirements for voter ID. You need an ID to cash a check, you need an ID to go to a bank, to buy alcohol, to drive a car; every person should need to show an ID in order to cast your most important thing, a vote.

We will also require proof of American citizenship in order to vote in American elections. We just have a good victory in court on that one, actually. We will ban ballot harvesting and prohibit the use of unsecured drop boxes to commit rampant fraud. These drop boxes are fraudulent. They get--they disappear, and then all of the sudden, they show up. It is fraudulent. We will stop the practice of universal unsolicited mail-in balloting. We will clean up the voter rolls and ensure that every single person who cast a vote is a citizen of our country, a resident of the state in which they vote, and their vote is cast in a lawful and honest manner.

We will restore the vital civic tradition of in-person voting on election day so that voters can be fully informed when they make their choice. We will finally hold big tech accountable, and if these people had courage and guts, they would get rid of Section 230, something that no other company, no other person in America, in the world has.

All of these tech monopolies are going to abuse their power and interfere in our elections, and it has to be stopped; and the Republicans have to get a lot tougher, and so should the Democrats. They should be regulated, investigated, and brought to justice under the fullest extent of the law. They are totally breaking the law.

Together we will drain the Washington swamp, and we will clean up the corruption in our nation's Capitol. We have done a big job on it, but you think it's easy; it's a dirty business. It's a dirty business. We have a lot of bad people out there. Despite everything we have been through looking out all over this country and seeing fantastic crowds, although this I think is our all-time record.

I think you have 250,000 people, 250,000. Looking out at all of the amazing patriots here today I have never been more confident in our nation's future. Well, I have to say we have to be a little bit careful. That's a nice statement, but we have to be a little careful with that statement. If we allow this group of people to illegally take over our country because it's illegal when the votes are illegal when the way that they got there is illegal, when the states that vote are given false and fraudulent information.

We are the greatest country on earth, and we are headed and were headed in the right direction. You know the wall is built; we are doing record numbers at the wall. Now they want to take down the wall. Let's let everyone flow in. Let's let everybody flow in. We did a great job on the wall. Remember the wall; they said it could never be done, one of the largest infrastructure projects we have ever had in this country, and it has had a tremendous impact and we got rid of catch and release, we got rid of all of the stuff that we had to live with. But now the caravans they think Biden is getting in the caravans are forming again. They want to come in again and rip off our country, can't let it happen.

As this enormous crowd shows, we have truth and justice on our side. We have a deep and enduring love for America in our hearts. We love our country. We have overwhelming pride in this great country. We have it deep in our souls. Together we are determined to defend and preserve government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Our brightest days are before us. Our greatest achievements still wait. I think one of our great achievements will be election security because nobody until I came along had any idea how corrupt our elections were, and again most people would stand there at 9 o'clock in the evening and say I want to thank you very much, and they go off to some other life, but I said something is wrong here, something is really wrong, can't have happened and we fight, we fight like hell, and if you don't fight like hell you're not going to have a country anymore.

Our exciting adventures and boldest endeavors have not yet begun. My fellow Americans, for our movement, for our children, and for our beloved country, and I say this despite all that has happened, the best is yet to come.

So we are going to--we are going to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue, I love Pennsylvania Avenue, and we are going to the Capitol, and we are going to try and give--the Democrats are hopeless, they are never voting for anything, not even one vote but we are going to try--give our Republicans, the weak ones because the strong ones don't need any of our help, we're try--going to try and give them the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country. So let's walk down Pennsylvania Avenue.

I want to thank you all. God bless you and God bless America. Thank you all for being here. This is incredible.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

At least 21 states activating National Guard troops in capitals to prepare for possible attacks

abcnews.go.com/US/21-states-activating-national-guard-troops-capitals-prepare/story



The nation's capital is on high alert, with up to 25,000 National Guards expected to be in place by Wednesday as more protests are expected as Biden's swearing-in draws closer.

At least 21 states are activating National Guard troops in preparation of possible attacks this week.

The FBI is warning that armed protests are being planned at all 50 state capitols as well on Capitol Hill after a group called for "storming" state, local and federal government courthouses and administrative buildings on Inauguration Day.

In Michigan, where armed militia breached the state Capitol in May, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced that the National Guard would be activated from Monday to Wednesday to provide additional security and crowd control measures.

"Last week's horrific scene on Capitol Hill was an attack on our democracy and shows that we need to be adequately prepared for acts of violence as President-elect Joe Biden is sworn in as our 46th President of the United States," said Whitmer, who faced a kidnapping plot against her in October.

Small protests took place in Ohio on Sunday, where Gov. Mike DeWine authorized 1,000 soldiers and airmen to provide assistance to federal authorities in Washington, D.C. Several hundred more are remaining in Columbus to protect citizens, public buildings and private property from "civil unrest," according to a statement from DeWine's office.

Other states where National Guard troops have been activated include California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Mexico, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wisconsin.

Biden will be inaugurated as the 46th president of the United States on Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

The House of Representatives voted Wednesday to impeach Trump for incitement of insurrection on the Capitol, making him the first president to ever be impeached twice. The vote triggers a trial in the Senate, but senators will not return early for an impeachment trial prior to the inauguration.

ABC News' Alexandra Faul and Will McDuffie contributed to this report.

Trump speaks to Pa. Senate committee, says he won 'by a lot'

post-gazette.com/news/state/2020/11/25/Trump-Republican-election-hearing-Giuliani-Gettysburg/stories/202011250128



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- Login
- Register
- Log out
- My Profile
- Subscriber Services

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- HOME
  - Homepage
  - This Just In
  - Chats
  - Weather
  - Traffic
  - Event Guide
  - PG Store
  - PGe
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  - Photos
  - The Digs
  - Circulars
  - RSS Feeds
- NEWS
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THE HILL

Liz Cheney blames Trump for r 'He lit the flame'

BY JUSTINE COLEMAN - 01/06/21 07:18 PM EST

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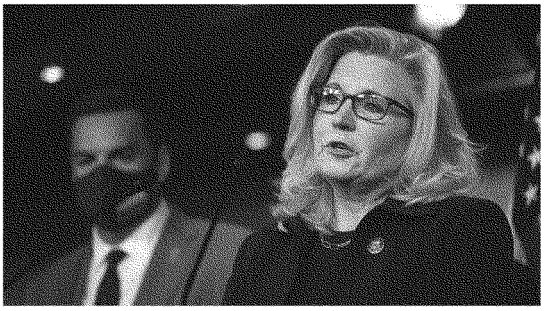

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Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.) blamed President Trump on Wednesday for the riots at the Capitol, saying the president "lit the flame" that ignited the mob.

Cheney, the House Republican Conference Chair, sharply condemned the president on Fox News, saying, "We just had a violent mob assault the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to prevent us from carrying out our constitutional duty."

"There's no question the president formed the mob, the president incited the mob, the president addressed the mob. He lit the flame," the third-highest-ranking House Republican continued.

"The mob will not prevail," she added.

> Liz Cheney: "We just had a violent mob assault the US capitol ... No question the President formed the mob, the President incited the mob, the President addressed the mob. He lit the flame." pic.twitter.com/MkOlaFbQRo
>
> — Josh Marshall (@joshtpm) January 6, 2021

Rioters raided the Capitol Wednesday to call for lawmakers to reject the Electoral College vote, forcing the House and the Senate to halt debates ahead of Congress' expected certification that President-elect Joe Biden won the election.

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Cheney, a frequent critic of Trump, had earlier on NBC News issued a scathing rebuke of Trump and his response to the rioters who overtook the Capitol.

"What he has done and what he has caused here is something that we've never seen before in our history," she told the network. "It's been 245 years, and no president has ever failed to concede or agree to leave office after the Electoral College has voted, and I think what we are seeing today is the result of that, the result of convincing people that somehow Congress was going to overturn the results of this election, the results of suggesting that he wouldn't leave office."

Trump had previously called his supporters to flock to D.C. on Wednesday as Congress was slated to certify the Electoral College vote.

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Before the rioters proceeded to the Capitol, Trump had addressed them in person, saying he would "never concede" the 2020 election.

"We've got to get rid of the weak Congress people, the ones that aren't any good," Trump told the crowd.

"The Liz Cheneys of the world," he added.

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Trump talked out of pardoning kids and Republican lawmakers

cnn.com/2021/01/19/politics/trump-self-pardon-warning/index.html

January 19, 2021

*(CNN)*President Donald Trump received an unsettling warning on his final Saturday night in the White House.

Huddled for a lengthy meeting with his legal advisers, Trump was warned the pardons he once hoped to bestow upon his family and even himself would place him in a legally perilous position, convey the appearance of guilt and potentially make him more vulnerable to reprisals.

So, too, was Trump warned that pardons for Republican lawmakers who had sought them for their role in the Capitol insurrection would anger the very Senate Republicans who will determine his fate in an upcoming impeachment trial.

White House counsel Pat Cipollone and another attorney who represented Trump in his first impeachment trial, Eric Herschmann, offered the grave warnings as Trump, his daughter Ivanka and her husband Jared Kushner listened. Other lawyers joined by telephone. They all told Trump he should not pardon himself, his family or any GOP lawmakers in a prospective manner unless he was prepared to list specific crimes.

Cipollone and former Attorney General William Barr both warned Trump earlier this month they did not believe he should pardon himself, multiple sources familiar with the matter told CNN last week. Barr conveyed this position to Trump before resigning last month, sources say.

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Trump continued to bring the matter up in the ensuing days, even after officials believed the issue was resolved. But the sobering meeting on Saturday evening at the White House seemed to put the idea to rest.

While Trump often discards advice he doesn't agree with -- particularly coming from Cipollone, with whom he has a fractured relationship -- the message Saturday resonated. The conversation spooked Trump in a way few others have, a person familiar with his reaction told CNN.

Now, Trump will leave office muted and disheartened at being unable to wield the power he has cherished most while president. Boxed in by his own actions that helped spark the riots at the Capitol, Trump finds himself constrained in a way he mostly avoided for his entire tenure.

His final batch of pardons, due later Tuesday, is expected to contain few of the controversial or outlandish criminals that have characterized his earlier use of his clemency powers.

Trump could still change his mind, and retains his sweeping clemency powers until noon on Wednesday. The President continues to bring up pardons that aides once thought were off

the table, including for former strategist Steve Bannon, leading to general uncertainty about whether Trump will continue adhering to his lawyers' advice.
There is a frantic scramble happening behind the scenes on whether to grant Bannon a pardon. One concern is Bannon's possible connection to the January 6 riot of Trump supporters at the US Capitol, according to a source familiar with the discussions.
Trump has continued to go back and forth on Bannon's pardon into Tuesday night, sources told CNN.
Earlier Tuesday, White House officials and others familiar with the matter describe a muted President, concerned about his pending impeachment trial and swirling legal problems, who was talked out of his long-discussed notions following the Capitol insurrection.
Several Republican lawmakers who are alleged to have been involved in the rally that preceded the deadly riot on the US Capitol have sought clemency from Trump before he leaves office, but after meeting with his legal advisers for several hours on Saturday, the President decided he would not grant them, according to two people familiar with his plans.

'Several dozen' of Trump's pardons pushed by criminal justice reform groups, source says
The fear of legal exposure is not limited to Republicans who promoted or spoke at the rally, including Reps. Andy Biggs, Mo Brooks and Paul Gosar. Those who participated, organized and fundraised for it are also concerned, sources told CNN, including his eldest son Donald Trump Jr. and his girlfriend Kimberly Guilfoyle, who both spoke at the rally.
Top figures associated with the groups that helped organize it -- including Women for America First and Turning Point Action, the political action committee arm of Turning Point USA -- have also voiced private concern about legal repercussions, a person familiar tells CNN.
Several of Trump's closest advisers have also urged him not to grant clemency to anyone who breached the US Capitol, despite Trump's initial stance that those involved had done nothing wrong.
As CNN has previously reported, one of the top organizers of the movement that aimed to overturn the election results claimed he worked closely with Republican congressmen. Ali Alexander, a leader of the "Stop the Steal" group, said in several livestream videos he planned the rally with Gosar of Arizona, Brooks of Alabama and Biggs of Arizona.
The idea of pardoning himself has captivated Trump nearly the entire span of his presidency. He viewed the prospect as a unilateral magic wand he believed could ease his legal troubles, if not make them disappear entirely.
Almost as alluring: preemptive clemency for members of his family, who Trump has long bemoaned were being unfairly targeted by his enemies. Rendering them immune from retribution seemed like a raised middle finger to his detractors.
The legal standing of either move was questionable, and Cipollone had been "direct and strong" that a self-pardon was unlikely to hold up in court, a person familiar with the matter said. Internally, one of Cipollone's legacy items is believed to be whether he dissuades Trump from pardoning himself.

Others appealed to Trump by warning he should be more concerned about the effect it would have his legacy, not the legal standing of the pardons.

The decision to not pardon any Republican lawmakers or his family members was a last minute one. After initially defending the idea that he may pardon himself or his family members out of concern they would be targeted once he's out of office, Trump decided Saturday night that he would not pardon anyone in his family or himself.

Trump agreed with the attorneys and other advisers that doing so would increase the appearance of guilt and could make them more vulnerable, but was disappointed at the outcome, according to people familiar with the matter.

Trump, according to people he'd spoken to, appeared more taken with the message of unchecked power it might send to his naysayers than actual protection from liability. His pardon power was among his favorite perks of the job.

Trump will depart office facing significant legal questions that only escalated during his final days in office. His phone call to Georgia's secretary of state urging him to "find" votes and his speech encouraging his crowd to "show strength" in their march to the Capitol have both put him under a legal microscope.

The new possible criminal exposure comes on top of ongoing New York state investigations into the President's finances and multiple defamation lawsuits related to Trump denying sexual assault accusations by women. The Manhattan district attorney's office has a broad criminal investigation looking into allegations of insurance fraud and tax fraud. The New York attorney general has a civil investigation into whether the Trump Organization improperly inflated the value of its assets.

The sizable legal store the President now enters provided the looming backdrop to his ongoing discussion of pardons, which began in earnest last year.

Over the past weeks, Trump has discussed pardons incessantly with associates, often asking if people who had not been accused of any crime wanted one before he left office. The discussions unnerved some aides, who did not believe they were in line for prosecution. Even as recently as Monday, with hours remaining in his presidency, Trump appeared fixated on pardons.

While he was considering preemptive pardons for his children and his personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, a source close to the process said those are no longer expected. Bannon, who has been indicted on fraud charges, is also not expected to receive a pardon on Tuesday, the source said.

Trump is also not expected to pardon Edward Snowden or Julian Assange, whose roles in revealing US secrets infuriated official Washington.

While he had once entertained the idea, Trump decided against it because he did not want to anger Senate Republicans who will soon determine whether he's convicted during his Senate trial. Multiple GOP lawmakers had sent messages through aides that they felt strongly about not granting clemency to Assange or Snowden.

As he departs office, Trump has expressed real concern that Republicans could turn on him. A conviction in the Senate impeachment trial would limit his future political activities and strip him of some of the government perks of being an ex-president.

Trump is less worried about being barred from running from office again, and more concerned with the optics of being convicted by the Senate, people familiar with the matter said.

Already shunned from polite society, Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner face new cold post-insurrection reality

cnn.com/2021/01/15/politics/ivanka-trump-jared-kushner-next-steps/index.html

January 15, 2021



*(CNN)*When Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner shared their decision to pick up and move their family to Washington from New York four years ago, multiple sources who know the couple said the idea was the White House years would allow easy entree to their ambitious next steps: Kushner would become a powerful player in global politics and Trump would become a shoo-in to a higher office of her own.

The couple have never been shy about their combined love of power. When they got engaged, Ivanka Trump said in an interview that she knew Kushner was the one when she found his ambition matched hers.

"Jared and I are very similar in that we're very ambitious. That's what makes it so amazing to be in a relationship with someone who is supportive of that," Trump told New York Magazine in 2009.

Yet now they find themselves staring down the end of the ignominious Trump presidency: the United States Capitol still showing signs of the deadly mob attack that breached the seat of democracy, thousands of National Guard troops cordoning off the city, President Donald Trump impeached (again) for his role in inciting the mob and the family patriarch robbed of his most powerful outlet after getting permanently banned from Twitter.

To fulfill their goals, Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner need to pull off the pivot of all pivots.

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Instead of a smile-and-wave final White House chapter, the couple are busy trying to keep the President from saying too little or too much, throwing themselves on a grenade they aren't certain will detonate but not able to take the chance either way.

A White House official sent this statement when asked for comment: "Ivanka came to Washington to give back to a nation that has given her so much and to fight for policies that help hardworking American families. Over four years, she spearheaded policies that created jobs, empowered American workers, fed families in need and supported small businesses throughout the pandemic. She is proud of her service and excited for the future."

Ivanka Trump was among those who pushed her father to make the Twitter video that ultimately got him banned in the wake of the riot, according to a White House official.

In it he told rioters to "go home," but in an off-script moment added, "We love you."

From her office in the West Wing, Ivanka Trump was fielding calls from Capitol Hill politicians who were literally hiding from a vicious and violent mob. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a ubiquitous presence with the President during golf outings and holiday jaunts to Mar-a-Lago, could not get in touch with Trump to beseech him to publicly call for a stop to the insurrection, a source familiar with the conversation told CNN. So Graham called Ivanka Trump, pleading for her to help talk to her dad.

Kushner intervened when other officials tried restoring the President's social media presence on sites that are often havens for extremists, such as Gab, following the unprecedented ban from several major platforms.

It was again Ivanka Trump key among the aides who pushed the President to issue a subsequent video in the wake of his impeachment, again denouncing any future violence or plots to wreak havoc across the country. There were no words of "love" this time.

The latest move was motivated by fear of potential legal exposure by the President, a source familiar with the taping told CNN.

And according to sources who have worked and socialized with Ivanka Trump and Kushner, their motivation was likely their fear over the state of their beloved moneymaker -- the Trump brand.

"They're trying to keep what little is left for them in terms of sellable currency as Trumps," said one source, who added the change from "before insurrection" to "after insurrection" has moved the needle on the state of the Trump empire from perilous to dire.

"The proof here about how worried (the family) is is how quiet they are," said another source, who notes the muzzled Twitter screeds and the dialed-back bravado, most notably of Ivanka Trump's brothers Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump.

Ivanka Trump's planned "farewell tour" of sorts to shore up the policy wins is now shelved, said someone with knowledge of the discussed public relations blitz. The eldest Trump daughter has not made secret her desire to explore running for office herself, confirm several sources, two of whom wondered aloud to CNN whether those dreams are now impossible to achieve.

"The idea that anyone will forget that her father incited these attacks is about zero," said one political operative who has worked in Republican politics. "If she wanted future voters to overlook just how devastating the end of this administration is, that's a big lift."

The future is Florida?

Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner to head south as she explores political future
In December, Trump and Kushner closed on the purchase of a $30 million plot of land on exclusive Indian Creek Island just north of Miami, with plans, friends say, to build a private estate. Murmurs that Trump wants to challenge Florida's GOP Sen. Marco Rubio for his seat in 2022 are growing -- or at least they were before the insurrection.
Adam C. Smith, former Tampa Bay Times political editor and now consultant with Mercury Public Affairs, said it's still possible Ivanka Trump could get a pass in Florida, where the MAGA crowd is strong, and forgiving.
"Until there's real evidence that the Trump brand is diminished with the activist base and dominant MAGA wing of the party, and not merely among elected Republicans and establishment types, I think Ivanka would remain the clear front-runner against Marco Rubio," he said.
Trump could also sit back to see what public sentiment dictates for her future, or she might want to wait the required seven years of Florida residency and then run for governor. One source who knows her noted that Trump has never had a problem believing in her own importance.
"Lack of self-confidence is not something she suffers from," the source said.
Politics or no, Florida at least provides a more living-friendly environment than New York City, where several former friends have said the couple will not be welcomed back into social circles with open arms.
The Kushner-Trumps also have a cottage at Trump Bedminster Golf Club in New Jersey, which was recently renovated to add more bedrooms. It's possible they could land there for some amount of time, but politically New Jersey is not Trump country, either.
Florida, where Ivanka Trump campaigned several times in the run-up to the presidential election, could provide a partisan haven, but the ease that she and Kushner were to have to parlay their years in Washington into new personas in the Sunshine State is now gone.

Family dynamics

Silent Melania Trump plods toward end of her husband's tumultuous term
The Trump family itself is not the same as it was in terms of relationships from the years before Washington to the present day.
The most fractured of the bonds is likely the tenuous friendship Trump previously had with her stepmother, Melania Trump. The two women are undoubtedly the most powerful and influential in the President's life, and prior to the White House years both were aware and respectful of one another's turf, according to sources familiar with the dynamic. However, Ivanka Trump's perceived incursions into first lady Melania Trump's lane have led to tension

between the women that's so bad, one source told CNN, there is little desire by either to be in the same room.

In recent months, Ivanka Trump and Melania Trump have not, in fact, been publicly photographed together, with the exception of the presidential debate in September and the Republican National Convention in August, where Melania sat on one side of the President with their son, Barron, her parents and the Pences, with Ivanka Trump across the stage on the other side.

At Thanksgiving, Ivanka Trump and the adult siblings went to Camp David, while Trump ate dinner at the White House with Melania Trump, Barron Trump and her parents. Over the Christmas holiday, Ivanka Trump and Kushner did not visit Mar-a-Lago as they had in years past. Though Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner have separate living space at Mar-a-Lago, where the outgoing first couple intends to live post-White House, one source said Melania Trump "hasn't exactly rolled out the welcome mat."

The elder Trump siblings have simmering issues, too, most stemming from how the President has behaved over the past two weeks.

"There's been some finger-pointing," said someone with knowledge of the situation.

But if there were ever a time for the Trump family to get on with its bunker mentality and try for an image upgrade, it would be now -- or the hotels, real estate, branded retail and any future Trump-touched business entities could be irretrievably damaged.

"I think this is one time the family has to acknowledge that their actions have had consequences," the source said.

Leaving Trump in office now will just encourage white nationalists

washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/01/08/leaving-trump-office-now-will-just-encourage-white-nationalists/

By Kathleen Belew and Elizabeth Neumann January 8, 2021



The stories from Wednesday should shake us: Members of Congress escaping the House and Senate floors moments before a mob broke through, barricading themselves in their offices or undisclosed locations for hours. Four people who stormed the building and one member of the Capitol Police department died. We are astonished that more lives weren't lost: Had the pipe bombs detonated, had the molotov cocktails ignited, had the people who stormed the Capitol with heavy-grade zip ties in hand and a military-grade weapon encountered legislators they might have meant to abduct, the body count would have been much higher.

But we should not let those lucky escapes distract us. This was an attack on democracy, an attack on our election, an attack on our elected representatives — incited by the president himself and carried out, among others, by a particularly dangerous group of radical extremists.

Although the mob included several constituencies, ranging from Trump fans to believers in disproved QAnon conspiracies, one set of people involved should cause particular alarm. Among the crowd were activists from the white power movement, neo-Nazis, Proud Boys and

other members of the militant right — people who have dedicated themselves to provoking race war and to the violent overthrow of the country. This week, they marched on the Capitol at the behest of the president. But there is no reason to think he can call them off or subdue their violence: Indeed, his halfhearted attempts to do so Wednesday had little effect. Nor do we believe his Thursday "concession" speech will curtail violent action.

Some conservative commentators and lawmakers suggested, falsely, that what happened Wednesday was a case of a peaceful pro-Trump protests being infiltrated by violent left-wing antifa activists. Experts quickly and resoundingly rejected that claim. Right-wing extremists organized their action long before Wednesday's assault on the Capitol. They massed at statehouses across the country Wednesday, as well, showing a nationally coordinated movement.

That's no surprise: Since the early 1980s, the white power movement has carried out a string of violent actions meant to destabilize the country and bring about civil strife. Some examples include assassinations and kidnappings of political enemies, federal judges and state troopers; coordinated bombings of synagogues, infrastructure targets and the Oklahoma City federal building; a sustained campaign of harassment and terror aimed at communities of color; and obtaining and training with stolen military weapons and explosives.

At the Capitol this week, we saw evidence of the white power presence through repeated references to "The Turner Diaries," a novel that has worked as a manual of operations for these activists for decades. The novel imagines a successful coup by white power activists who take over a homeland, then the United States, then the world. Several of the methods used in the book appeared in the attempted insurrection. One is the "Day of the Rope," in which "traitors" (including members of Congress, people in interracial relationships, journalists and other enemies) are publicly hanged. This week, the mob erected a gallows, and people took selfies in front of it.

"The Turner Diaries" also prominently features an attack on the U.S. Capitol, though somewhat different than what we saw; in the book, it's a mortar attack. But significantly, the point of the attack is not a mass casualties, but to show not-yet-radicalized White people that even the Capitol can be attacked. Like this week's action, it's meant to be a show of force.

This historical context is important: "The Turner Diaries" has been enormously important to white power, militant right andaccelerationist activists not because it's a good novel, but because it explains how a small number of people might overthrow the United States. And the plan outlined in the book is profoundly genocidal and anti-democratic, eventually involving the annihilation of all non-White people throughout the world using chemical, nuclear and biological weapons.

Some of the people who stormed the Capitol this week, then, come from the same movement that has been threatening democracy and killing civilians for decades, if not generations. The attempted insurrection didn't come out of nowhere — it follows a history we can learn and understand to combat this very dangerous ideology. As a reminder, the nation in white nationalism is the Aryan nation, not the United States. This movement is anti-American.

As they process the trauma they've endured, we hope members of Congress realize the fear and panic they experienced Wednesday have already been felt by many other communities. They now share an experience with people who survived white power attacks in Charlottesville, El Paso, Pittsburgh, Charleston and Oklahoma City. People of color and Muslim and Jewish faith communities have lived with this fear for decades. But now, perhaps, the broader political system can understand this as a clear and present danger to everyone who cares about democracy.

The enemy we face existed for decades before Trump: He has simply fanned a long-burning flame. Counterterrorism and extremist experts have been expressing alarm about the growing emboldenment of violent white extremists for years. Over the past 10 years, 76 percent of extremist-related killings were conducted by right-wing extremists, the preponderance of those by white power activists. The Department of Homeland Security's current threat assessment shows that white extremism — and not leftist or Islamist extremism — represents the greatest terrorist threat to our country.

From the history of this movement and open-source intelligence, we know that this week was a salvo in a continuing battle. "Insurrection" is the right word, because we should understand this as one battle in a larger war — that's how the militants will view it. In extremist spaces online, activists view this as a victory: They stormed the Capitol, breached the building, made legislators cower and delayed the certification of a free election. It was successful as a show of force, and they will be emboldened to do more. And we know from "The Turner Diaries" and from the real violence carried out in its image that what comes next will be mass casualty attacks. This is the same movement that delivered our nation's largest mass-casualty event between Pearl Harbor and 9/11 — and the 168 killed and hundreds injured in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing represent only part of the casualties we have endured at the hands of white extremists.

In the face of this grave threat, vague statements with platitudes about this "not being who we are" won't cut it. Nor will Cabinet members simply resigning in protest. They have to act if they want to help, beginning with the removal of the inciter-in-chief. If Vice President Pence is unwilling to fulfill his oath of office to protect the United States "from all enemies, foreign and domestic" and lead the Cabinet in invoking the 25th Amendment, Congress must act. Congressional Republicans of integrity and with a true love for their country should recognize the grave threat we face and support impeachment and conviction. Because the threat is coming from the right, it is all the more critical for the denouncement of violent extremism to come from the right. A united Republican response removing the individual

most responsible for the incitement and empowerment of violent extremism would send a swift message that the United States will not tolerate supporting terrorism in any form — even when it comes from within their own party.

But because Trump is not in control of this groundswell, the action cannot end there. Congress and the Biden administration will need to do more than just acknowledge violent white-supremacist extremism as our top terrorist threat: They also need to update statutes and policies to ensure counterterrorism and law enforcement professionals can address it. They need to swiftly investigate any valid accusations of law enforcement turning a blind eye or enabling white supremacists, including at the Capitol on Wednesday, and insist on a significant assessment of infiltration within the ranks of the military and law enforcement. And given the size of the problem we face, they need to expand prevention efforts and deradicalization resources to take pressure off law enforcement and counterterrorism professionals.

We must hold our officials accountable and demand an appropriately urgent response. If we do not, attacks on Americans and our democratic institutions will continue.

The New York Times | https://nyti.ms/2UcA72A

Barr Hands Prosecutors the Authority to Investigate Voter Fraud Claims

The attorney general said that he had authorized "instances" of investigative steps but that inquiries should not be based on specious claims.



By Katie Benner and Michael S. Schmidt

Nov. 9, 2020

WASHINGTON — Attorney General William P. Barr, wading into President Trump's unfounded accusations of widespread election irregularities, told federal prosecutors on Monday that they were allowed to investigate "specific allegations" of voter fraud before the results of the presidential race are certified.

Mr. Barr's authorization prompted the Justice Department official who oversees investigations of voter fraud, Richard Pilger, to step down from the post within hours, according to an email Mr. Pilger sent to colleagues that was obtained by The New York Times.

Mr. Barr said he had authorized "specific instances" of investigative steps in some cases. He made clear in a carefully worded memo that prosecutors had the authority to investigate, but he warned that "specious, speculative, fanciful or far-fetched claims should not be a basis for initiating federal inquiries."

Mr. Barr's directive ignored the Justice Department's longstanding policies intended to keep law enforcement from affecting the outcome of an election. And it followed a move weeks before the election in which the department lifted a prohibition on voter fraud investigations before an election.

"Given that voting in our current elections has now concluded, I authorize you to pursue substantial allegations of voting and vote tabulation irregularities prior to the certification of elections in your jurisdictions," Mr. Barr wrote.

A Justice Department official said that Mr. Barr had authorized scrutiny of allegations about ineligible voters in Nevada and backdated mail-in ballots in Pennsylvania. Republicans have circulated both claims in recent days without any evidence emerging to back them.

Mr. Barr did not write the memo at the direction of Mr. Trump, the White House or any Republican lawmakers, the official said.

Mr. Barr has privately told department officials in the days since the election that any disputes should be resolved in court by the campaigns themselves, according to three people briefed on the conversations. He has said that he did not see massive fraud, and that most of the allegations of voter fraud were related to individual instances that did not point to a larger systemic problem, the people said.

But critics of Mr. Barr immediately condemned the memo as a political act that undermined the Justice Department's typical independence from the White House.

"It would be problematic enough if Barr were reversing longstanding Justice Department guidance because of significant, substantiated claims of misconduct — that could presumably be handled at the local and state level," said Stephen I.

Vladeck, a professor at the University of Texas School of Law.

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"But to do so when there is no such evidence — and when the president's clear strategy is to delegitimize the results of a proper election — is one of the more problematic acts of any attorney general in my lifetime," Mr. Vladeck added.

Mr. Pilger, a career prosecutor in the department's Public Integrity Section who oversaw voting-fraud-related investigations, told colleagues he would move to a nonsupervisory role working on corruption prosecutions.

"Having familiarized myself with the new policy and its ramifications," he wrote, "I must regretfully resign from my role as director of the Election Crimes Branch." A Justice Department spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment about Mr. Pilger's message.

The Biden Administration

Live Updates: Inauguration Live Updates ›

Updated Jan. 20, 2021

- Michael Ellis, a Trump appointee at the N.S.A. who was sworn in on Tuesday, has been placed on leave.
- The Biden administration moved to remove a Trump labor appointee.
- Inaugural concert with Bruce Springsteen, Justin Timberlake, John Legend and more begins.

Is this helpful?

Justice Department policies prohibit federal prosecutors from taking overt steps, like questioning witnesses or securing subpoenas for documents, to open a criminal investigation into any election-related matter until after voting results have been certified to keep their existence from spilling into public view and influencing either voters or local election officials who ensure the integrity of the results.

"Public knowledge of a criminal investigation could impact the adjudication of election litigation and contests in state courts," the Justice Department's longstanding election guidelines for prosecutors say. "Accordingly, it is the general policy of the department not to conduct overt investigations."

More covert investigative steps, like an investigator going undercover, are allowed but require the permission of a career prosecutor in the department's Criminal Division.

Mr. Barr's memo allows U.S. attorneys to bypass that career prosecutor and take their requests to his office for approval, effectively weakening a key safeguard that prevents political interference in an election by the party in power.

Workers counting ballots at the county Election Department in Las Vegas on Saturday. Bridget Bennett for The New York Times

The memo is unlikely to change the outcome of the election but could damage public confidence in the results, Justice Department prosecutors warned, speaking on the condition of anonymity for fear of retribution. They said that the public posturing by the department also gave Republicans, including Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader, a tool to refuse to acknowledge Mr. Biden as the president-elect.

Mr. McConnell and Mr. Barr met on Monday afternoon. Representatives from both of their offices declined to comment on what they discussed.

Mr. Trump faces a steep battle in his attempt to change the election results. Mr. Biden declared victory on Saturday after several news media organizations declared him the winner based on tabulated election returns.

"It's not merely about showing evidence of fraud but that the malfeasance would actually affect the outcome in several states," said Matt Gorman, a Republican strategist. "You're talking about changing hundreds of thousands of votes."

While Mr. Trump's campaign lawyers have filed a dozen or so legal challenges to the results in battleground states, none appeared to be gaining traction in the courts. And none were likely to give the president an edge in the votes he would need to change the outcome of the race.

Justice Department investigators are looking into a referral from the Republican Party in Nevada, which claims over 3,000 people who live outside the state voted in its election, the department official said. The official would not say whether the department had opened a full investigation. A federal judge dismissed the claim in court last week.

The department is also reviewing a sworn affidavit written by a postal worker in Erie, Pa., alleging that post office officials devised a plan to backdate mail ballots in the state, the official said.

The local postmaster has denied the allegations and said that the accuser has been disciplined multiple times in the past. That affidavit was sent to the department by Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina and head of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who is a close ally of the president.

In the days after the election, Mr. Barr faced pressure from Mr. Trump and his aides to intervene to help the president. Conservative commentators have criticized Mr. Barr's lack of action, saying that he was looking the other way.

Mr. Barr had been silent about voter fraud in recent weeks after previously issuing unsubstantiated warnings of widespread fraud because of the large number of mail-in ballots cast in this election. Voter fraud is rare, and no major

instances of it have emerged in the election.

At the same time, the department has made it easier for prosecutors to pursue voter fraud cases and publicized details from the investigations that generated headlines that helped Mr. Trump, prompting sharp criticism from Democrats and civil rights advocates.

Maggie Haberman contributed reporting.

Georgia again certifies election results showing Biden won

AP apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-georgia-elections-4eeea3b24f10de886bcdeab6c26b680a

December 7, 2020



ADVERTISEMENT

By KATE BRUMBACKDecember 8, 2020 GMT

1 of 2

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger makes remarks during a press conference at the Georgia State Capitol building in Atlanta, Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2020. (Alyssa Pointer/Atlanta Journal-Constitution via AP)

1 of 2

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger makes remarks during a press conference at the Georgia State Capitol building in Atlanta, Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2020. (Alyssa Pointer/Atlanta Journal-Constitution via AP)

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia's top elections official on Monday recertified the state's election results after a recount requested by President Donald Trump confirmed once again that Democrat Joe Biden won the state, and the governor then recertified the state's 16 presidential electors.

"We have now counted legally cast ballots three times, and the results remain unchanged," Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger said during a news conference at the state Capitol before the results were recertified.

Georgia law allows a losing candidate to request a recount if the margin between the candidates is within 0.5%. Trump requested the recount after the results certified by Raffensperger showed that Biden led by a margin of 12,670 votes, or 0.25% of the roughly 5 million ballots cast.

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During the recount, which was done using scanners that read and tally the votes, there were discrepancies in vote totals in some counties. Since the results of a recount become the official results, those counties had to recertify their results. Once that was done the secretary of state recertified the statewide results, his office said in a news release.

Kemp then recertified the state's slate of 16 presidential electors — all prominent Democrats — as required by state law, spokesman Cody Hall said. The recertification of results comes before the federal "safe harbor" deadline on Tuesday — electors named by that date in accordance with state law cannot be disregarded by Congress.

The recount was the third tally of votes in the presidential race in the state. After the initial count following Election Day, Raffensperger selected the presidential race for an audit required by state law. The tight margin meant the audit required the roughly 5 million votes in that contest to be recounted by hand, he said. That count also affirmed Biden's victory.

The total number of votes in the recount results certified Monday and posted on the secretary of state's website was 766 fewer than the number certified when the ballots were first tallied after the election. Biden's lead dropped from 12,670 to 11,779. That appears to be largely due to a discrepancy in Fulton County, the state's most populous county that includes most of Atlanta.

Fulton County's recount results showed 880 fewer votes than the results certified after election night, with an overwhelming majority of those votes coming from Biden's total in the county. Gabriel Sterling, who oversaw the implementation of the state's new voting system,

called the discrepancy in the county "a little worrisome" but said it's a big county that's had managerial issues. He also noted the difference isn't enough to change the overall outcome of the election.

Also Monday, a federal judge dismissed a lawsuit filed on behalf of would-be Republican presidential electors by former Trump lawyer Sidney Powell. The suit alleged widespread fraud and sought to decertify the results of the presidential race in Georgia, among other things.

In the lawsuit, "the plaintiffs essentially ask the court for perhaps the most extraordinary relief ever sought in any federal court in connection with an election. They want this court to substitute its judgment for that of 2 and a half million Georgia voters who voted for Joe Biden and this I am unwilling to do," U.S. District Judge Timothy Batten as he dismissed the suit following a hearing.

Separately, an election challenge filed Friday by Trump, his campaign and Georgia Republican Party Chairman David Shafer was rejected by the Fulton County Superior Court because the paperwork was improperly completed and it lacked the appropriate filing fees.

Even as lawsuits filed by Trump and his allies have been rejected around the country, the president has continued to make repeated baseless claims of widespread fraud. In Georgia, he has rained criticism on Raffensperger and Kemp, both fellow Republicans. Raffensperger, meanwhile, has been steadfast in his defense of the integrity of the election in the state and Kemp has said he has no power to intervene in elections.

"I know there are people that are convinced the election was fraught with problems, but the evidence, the actual evidence, the facts tell us a different story," Raffensperger said during the news conference Monday.

Hours before coming to Georgia for a rally Saturday night, Trump called Kemp and asked him to call a special legislative session. The governor declined.

In a tweet Sunday, Trump criticized Kemp and Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan for inaction and again called for a special session.

After four Republican state lawmakers on Sunday also requested a special session, Kemp and Duncan put out a statement saying that convening a special session to select a different slate of presidential electors would not be allowed under state or federal law.

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Federal Prosecutors Push Back on Barr Memo on Voter Fraud Claims

nytimes.com/2020/11/13/us/politics/justice-department-voter-fraud.html

November 14, 2020



WASHINGTON — Career Justice Department prosecutors pushed back this week against a memo by Attorney General William P. Barr that opened the door to politically charged election fraud investigations, saying in a pair of messages that Mr. Barr thrust the department into politics and falsely overstated the threat of voter fraud.

The protests were the latest rebuke of Mr. Barr by his own employees, who have in recent months begun criticizing his leadership both privately and publicly. They argued that Mr. Barr has worked to advance President Trump's interests by wielding the power of the department to shield his allies and attack his enemies.

On Friday, 16 federal prosecutors across the country who were assigned to monitor elections for signs of fraud wrote to Mr. Barr that they had found no evidence of "substantial allegations of voting and vote tabulation irregularities." They also asked him to rescind the memo, saying it thrust the department into partisan politics and was unnecessary because no one has identified any legitimate suspicions of mass voter fraud.

The memo "is not based in fact," the monitors wrote.

Issued Monday amid the president's efforts to falsely claim widespread voter fraud, the memo allows prosecutors to investigate "substantial allegations" of fraud before the results of the presidential race are certified, disregarding longstanding department policies intended to keep law enforcement investigations from affecting the outcome of an election.

"It was developed and announced without consulting nonpartisan career professionals in the field and at the department," the prosecutors wrote of the memo. "The timing of the memorandum's release thrusts career prosecutors into partisan politics." The Washington Post earlier reported their letter.

On Thursday, a top career prosecutor in the U.S. attorney's office in Washington said in an email sent to Mr. Barr via Richard P. Donoghue, an official in the deputy attorney general's office, that the memo should be rescinded because it went against longstanding practices, according to two people with knowledge of the email.

The prosecutor, J.P. Cooney, also said that the fact that Richard Pilger, a longtime department employee who oversees election fraud crimes, chose to step down from that position over the memo was deeply concerning, the people said.

In response, Mr. Donoghue told Mr. Cooney that he would pass on his complaint but that if it leaked to reporters, he would note that as well. Given that the email was born out of a concern for integrity, Mr. Donoghue said in his reply that he would assure officials "that I have a high degree of confidence that it will not be improperly leaked to the media."

A department spokeswoman declined to comment about Mr. Cooney's message. Asked about the prosecutors' letter to Mr. Barr, she said that his memo directed prosecutors to "exercise appropriate caution and maintain the department's absolute commitment to fairness, neutrality and nonpartisanship."

Others inside the department pointed out that Mr. Barr's memo was carefully worded and contained caveats that made it unlikely that a prosecutor could meet the threshold to open a case and begin investigating.

"Specious, speculative, fanciful or far-fetched claims should not be a basis for initiating federal inquiries," Mr. Barr wrote in his memo. "Nothing here should be taken as any indication that the department has concluded that voting irregularities have impacted the outcome of any election."

Department lawyers often engage in heated debates over policies, investigations and prosecutions, but they rarely put their criticisms in writing and then send them to top officials.

But Mr. Barr's memo churned up rancor among prosecutors who work on election fraud, in large part because Mr. Trump himself was making false claims about widespread voter fraud. Even the specter of such an investigation into votes for the presidential race could shade the

integrity of the election.

Mr. Pilger, the prosecutor who oversees election fraud at the department's headquarters in Washington, stepped down from his supervisory role in protest a few hours after it was issued; and other lawyers affected by the memo began to devise plans for how to push back on Mr. Barr's authorization and what to do should a U.S. attorney announce an election-related investigation, according to three people with knowledge of these discussions.

Even as the department's officials and career prosecutors argued about the memo, Mr. Trump's legal cases related to the election began to unravel on Friday. A state judge in Michigan rejected an attempt by Republicans to halt the certification of the vote in Wayne County, which includes Detroit, pending an audit. And lawyers for Mr. Trump withdrew election-related lawsuits in Pennsylvania and Arizona.

The New York Times | https://nyti.ms/3j9rGQb

Trump Says QAnon Followers Are People Who 'Love Our Country'

When asked, the president did not question the truth behind the claims of the QAnon conspiracy movement. Instead, he offered his help.



By Katie Rogers and Kevin Roose

Aug. 19, 2020

WASHINGTON — President Trump on Wednesday offered encouragement to proponents of QAnon, a viral conspiracy theory that has gained a widespread following among people who believe the president is secretly battling a criminal band of sex traffickers, and suggested that its proponents were patriots upset with unrest in Democratic cities.

"I've heard these are people that love our country," Mr. Trump said during a White House news conference ostensibly about the coronavirus. "So I don't know really anything about it other than they do supposedly like me."

When told by a reporter about the central premise of the QAnon theory — a belief that Mr. Trump is saving the world from a satanic cult made up of pedophiles and cannibals connected to Democratic Party figures, so-called deep-state actors and Hollywood celebrities — Mr. Trump did not question the validity of the movement or the truth of those claims.

Instead, he offered his help.

"Is that supposed to be a bad thing or a good thing?" the president said lightly, responding to a reporter who asked if he could support that theory. "If I can help save the world from problems, I am willing to do it. I'm willing to put myself out there."

Mr. Trump's cavalier response was a remarkable public expression of support for conspiracy theorists who have operated in the darkest corners of the internet and have at times been charged with domestic terrorism and planned kidnapping.

"QAnon conspiracy theorists spread disinformation and foster a climate of extremism and paranoia, which in some cases has led to violence. Condemning this movement should not be difficult," said Jonathan A. Greenblatt, the chief executive of the Anti-Defamation League. "It's downright dangerous when a leader not only refuses to do so, but also wonders whether what they are doing is 'a good thing.'"

Mr. Trump's comments also elevated a group of people who the F.B.I. has said poses a domestic terrorism threat.

"QAnon is promoting political disinformation, medical disinformation and carrying on a legacy of anti-Semitic tropes," Joan Donovan, the research director at the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, said in an interview. "Attention from the president is only going to embolden these groups to grow their ranks."

Although a majority of Americans say they remain unfamiliar with the particulars of the movement — research shows that people who use social media platforms like Twitter and Reddit are more likely to be familiar with QAnon — those who study the behavior of fringe groups have warned of the power to produce extremism among followers.

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QAnon is a larger and many-tentacled version of the Pizzagate conspiracy theory, which falsely claimed that Hillary Clinton was operating a child sex-trafficking ring out of the basement of a Washington, D.C., pizza restaurant. In December 2016, a man who said he was on the hunt for proof of child abuse was arrested after firing a rifle inside the restaurant.

QAnon supporters often flood social media pages with memes and YouTube videos that target well-known figures — like Mrs. Clinton and her husband, former President Bill Clinton, and the actor Tom Hanks — with unfounded claims about their links to child abuse. Lately, activists have used anti-child-trafficking hashtags as a recruitment tool.

"It's not just a conspiracy theory, this is a domestic extremist movement," said Travis View, a host of "QAnon Anonymous," a podcast that seeks to explain the movement. Mr. View said that Twitter and Facebook pages exploded with comments from gleeful followers after Mr. Trump's comments.

Mr. View pointed out that the president answered the question by supporting the central premise of the QAnon theory — that he is battling a cabal of left-wing pedophiles — rather than addressing the lack of evidence behind the movement.

"They are very practiced at trying to interpret any comment from Trump as validation," Mr. View said of the movement's followers. "And Trump very coyly indicated he would help if he could."

In recent weeks, platforms including Twitter and Facebook have rushed to dismantle a mushrooming number of QAnon-related accounts and fan pages, a move that people who study the movement say is too little and too late. On Wednesday, after a record amount of QAnon-related growth on the site, Facebook said it removed 790 QAnon groups and was restricting another 1,950 groups, 440 pages and more than 10,000 Instagram accounts.

On Facebook alone, activity on some of the largest QAnon groups rose 200 to 300 percent in the past six months, according to data gathered by The New York Times.

"We have seen growing movements that, while not directly organizing violence, have celebrated violent acts, shown that they have weapons and suggest they will use them, or have individual followers with patterns of violent behavior," Facebook said in a statement, adding that it would also block QAnon hashtags like #digitalarmy and #thestorm.

But the movement made the jump from social media long ago: With dozens of QAnon supporters running this year for Congress — including several who have won Republican primaries in Oregon and Georgia — QAnon is knocking on the door of mainstream politics, and has done so with the president's help.

QAnon's origins are murky. In October 2017, a post appeared on the 4chan message board from an anonymous account calling itself "Q Clearance Patriot." This poster, who became known simply as "Q," claimed to be an intelligence officer with access to classified information about a war Mr. Trump was waging against the global

cabal.

According to QAnon lore, Mr. Trump was recruited by top military generals to run for president in 2016 in order to break up the cabal's criminal conspiracy, end its control of politics and the media, and bring its members to justice.

It has also incorporated elements of other conspiracy theories, including claims about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the existence of U.F.O.s and the 9/11 "truther" movement.

For years, Mr. Trump and his campaign have flirted with the QAnon movement. Kayleigh McEnany, the White House press secretary, has interviewed supporters in her role as a spokeswoman for the Trump campaign, creating footage that was later promoted to Mr. Trump's supporters.

"If you could say one thing to the president, what would you say?" Ms. McEnany said to a supporter outside a campaign rally in February as several attendees shouted, "Q!" The two talked about what it meant to be a "digital soldier" for Mr. Trump.

"Who is Q?" the man replied. Ms. McEnany said that she would pass the message along.

For his part, the president has often reposted QAnon-centric content into his Twitter feed. And QAnon followers have long interpreted messages from Dan Scavino, the White House director of social media, as promoting tongue-in-cheek symbols associated with the movement.

"I'm not surprised at all by his reaction, and I don't think QAnon conspirators are surprised either. It's terrifying," Vanessa Bouché, an associate professor of political science at Texas Christian University, said in an interview. "In a democratic society, we make decisions based on information. And if people are believing these lies, then we're in a very dangerous position."

Last week, Mr. Trump tweeted his support of Marjorie Taylor Greene, a QAnon follower who won her House primary runoff in Georgia, but he declined to directly embrace the movement itself during a White House news conference.

"She won by a lot," he said. "She comes from a great state."

But on Twitter, Mr. Trump endorsed Ms. Greene, calling her a "future Republican Star" and "a real WINNER!"

Katie Rogers reported from Washington, and Kevin Roose from San Francisco. Sheera Frenkel contributed reporting from San Francisco.

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Video shows Capitol mob dragging police officer down stairs. One rioter beat the officer with a pole flying the U.S. flag.

By **Katie Shepherd**

Jan. 11, 2021 at 4:37 a.m. EST

As a mob of pro-Trump rioters attacked the Capitol on Wednesday, one man in a white hat and backpack grabbed a police officer by the helmet, dragging the officer down the stairs. Soon, other rioters kicked and punched the officer, and one man even bashed the prone figure repeatedly with a pole flying an American flag.

The shocking violence against an outnumbered officer is shown in a video published by Storyful last week and aired by CNN on Sunday. It swiftly went viral, garnering more than 1.6 million views on Twitter by early Monday.

The officer seen in the video, as well as in other photos and videos of the moment that later surfaced on social media, has not been officially identified. The extent of the injuries the officer suffered in the attack is not clear. D.C. Metropolitan Police and U.S. Capitol Police did not immediately reply to a request for comment on the video late Sunday.

The video adds a new layer of evidence documenting the violence that pro-Trump rioters unleashed during the attempted insurrection at the Capitol, where overrun police tried to protect the federal building. One U.S. Capitol Police officer, Brian D. Sicknick, suffered injures in the incident and later died, and more than 50 other police officers were hurt. One rioter was fatally shot by police, and three other people died following medical emergencies.

CNN reported that the video captured the scene outside the Capitol around 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday. That's roughly 10 minutes after President Trump tweeted a video message addressing the crowd, telling the rioters: "We love you. You're very special."

"We've seen what happens. You see the way others are treated that are so bad and so evil," Trump continued in the statement. "I know you how feel. But go home, and go home in peace."

The video shows that after the man grabbed the police officer, yanking him down the stairs, others kicked and beat the officer on the ground. As the crowd attacked, people chanted "U-S-A! U-S-A!" and a man shouted, "Take him out."

At the same time, other people in the crowd threw flagpoles, metal crutches and other projectiles at police standing just inside an archway, trying to prevent the mob from entering the Capitol.

The attempted insurrection, and Trump's role in provoking it, were widely condemned by officials, including Republican Sens. Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and Patrick J. Toomey (Pa.), who this weekend called for Trump to resign. House Democrats readied to impeach Trump this week, unless Vice President Pence and the Cabinet invoke the 25th

Amendment to remove him first.

After most members of the mob left the Capitol for hotel rooms and flights back to their home states, the damage caused by the pro-Trump mob has been revealed through photographs, videos and firsthand accounts. Windows were shattered, furniture overturned or smashed and Senate offices raided. Police also said they found and disabled two "hazardous" pipe bombs near the Capitol.

Officials have launched more than two dozen domestic terrorism investigations, Rep. Jason Crow (D-Colo.) said in a statement on Sunday summarizing a conversation he had with Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy. Crow said he raised concerns about reports of active-duty military personnel participating in the violence last week, and he noted that the rioters brought weapons and bombs to the Capitol.

"Long guns, molotov cocktails, explosive devices, and zip ties were recovered, which suggests a greater disaster was narrowly avoided," Crow said.

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The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Inside the Capitol siege: How barricaded lawmakers and aides sounded urgent pleas for help as police lost control

By **Karoun Demirjian**, **Carol D. Leonnig**, **Paul Kane** and **Aaron C. Davis**

Jan. 10, 2021 at 12:07 a.m. EST

The growing crowds outside the Capitol on Wednesday afternoon sounded menacing but at bay as senators began to debate challenges to the electoral college vote. A top adviser to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell stepped out of the ornate chamber for a short break.

Alone in the Capitol's marble halls, just outside the chamber's bronze doors, it was suddenly apparent that the citadel of U.S. democracy was falling to the mob incited by President Trump.

A cacophony of screaming, shouting and banging echoed from the floor below. McConnell's security detail rushed past and into the chamber. The adviser began walking toward the Rotunda and came face to face with a U.S. Capitol Police officer sprinting in the opposite direction. The two made eye contact and the officer forced out a single word: "Run!"

The aide to McConnell (R-Ky.) darted down a side hallway lined with offices. He jiggled one locked doorknob, then another. A co-worker poked his head out of the office of McConnell's speechwriter. The adviser lunged, pushing him and a colleague back inside.

The screaming and shouting soon seemed right outside. Only then, a text alert from Capitol police blared on every phone in the room: "Due to security threat inside: immediately, move inside your office, take emergency equipment, lock the doors, take shelter."

Three senior GOP aides piled furniture against the door and tried to move stealthily, worried that the intruders would discover them inside. In waves, the door to the hall heaved as rioters punched and kicked it. The crowd yelled "Stop the steal!" Some chanted menacingly, referring to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi: "Where's Nancy? Where's Nancy?"

Peering out a window into a courtyard below, the adviser could see scores of people still streaming in — and no police in sight.

Before Congress met on Jan. 6 to formalize President-elect Joe Biden's victory, Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund had assured House and Senate members that his force of 2,000 officers could handle the large expected crowds, according to multiple people who spoke with Sund in the days leading up to the siege.

But across the Capitol that day, as lawmakers and aides were holed up in offices, closets and conference rooms, a terrifying reality was taking hold — the Capitol police had lost control and no one was coming to save Congress, at least not right away.

The deaths of five people, including a Capitol police officer, were linked to the riot. During their rampage, marauders came perilously close to penetrating the inner sanctums of the Capitol while lawmakers were still there, according to a reconstruction of the events based on eyewitness videos and interviews with nearly 40 lawmakers, staff members and law enforcement officials. The belated emergency response carried out with the help of the D.C. police, FBI and National Guard came after pleas by people sheltering throughout the complex.

Armed only with their phones and some of the best Rolodexes in the world, lawmakers and their aides began calling and texting anyone they thought could help — the secretary of the Army, the acting attorney general, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, governors of nearby states, the D.C. mayor.

The McConnell adviser, who described his role on the condition of anonymity because of security concerns after the attack, reached out to former top officials at the Justice Department.

Speaking in a whisper, he told one the situation was dire: If backup did not arrive soon, people could die.

The drumbeat

For almost two months leading up to that day, Trump had alleged massive fraud in his November election loss. He had applauded supporters, calling them "patriots," when they converged twice before in Washington to parrot Trump's message that his second term had been stolen through wild conspiracy theories of voting-machine fraud.

On Dec. 19, five days after the electoral college convened to finalize states' counts, the president for the first time advertised and endorsed a third such protest. This one would be held on the day that Congress would take the final step of counting the electoral college votes in a joint session, cementing Biden's victory.

"Big protest in D.C. on January 6th," Trump tweeted. "Be there, will be wild!"

The previous two protests had ended with bands of Trump supporters and counter protesters in late-night, violent brawls on the streets of downtown Washington.

After Trump's imprimatur, D.C. police quickly began bracing for a final protest that could dwarf the previous two, with a stadium-sized crowd. The president's personal encouragement also prompted immediate concern on Capitol Hill.

Aides to McConnell, along with their Democratic counterparts, asked for briefings with Michael Stenger, a former assistant director of the U.S. Secret Service whom the GOP leader had tapped as Senate sergeant at arms. They also met with Sund, the Capitol police chief, who had previously been a D.C. police commander and led responses to mass shootings and planned crowd management for the estimated 1 million people who attended President Barack Obama's first inauguration.

House Democrats were also concerned. At a House Caucus meeting before Christmas, Rep. Maxine Waters of California asked where Capitol police would allow people to gather, and if they would be allowed on the Capitol plaza, the brick and paved area immediately around the building that leads to walking paths to the offices of lawmakers.

In the back of Waters's mind was a 2010 incident when protesters had gathered against a vote on Obama's health-care

plan. Some surrounded and followed then Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) back toward his office, hurling racial epithets. One even spit on him.

In an hour-long conversation on New Year's Eve, Waters said Sund told her he had a plan for keeping protesters far from the building. They would be corralled beyond the plaza, in a grassy area east of the Capitol, she recalled. If counterprotesters showed up, his officers would form a line between the two groups, and as a precaution for lawmakers, Capitol security would direct all members of Congress and their staffers to travel by the network of underground tunnels that connect the Capitol with House and Senate office buildings.

Waters recalled asking Sund what intelligence the force had about how big the gathering would be. Sund, she said, didn't have a clear answer. She hung up the phone at her home in D.C. thinking, "They don't know who's coming. They don't know whether any of these are violent groups."

On the eve of the joint session, lawmakers peppered top Capitol security officials with more questions.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), the chair of the House Administration Committee that oversees Capitol security, said she held a teleconference with Sund and House Sergeant at Arms Paul Irving, another ex-Secret Service assistant director selected by Pelosi for his post.

The National Park Service, which issued the permit to organizers, had allowed the pro-Trump supporters to adjust their expected crowd size sixfold, up from 5,000 to 30,000.

Lofgren asked whether Capitol police had enough officers to handle the capacity, and if they had the National Guard on standby and available to quickly help if needed.

Sund insisted, yes, they had both bases covered, Lofgren said. Later, in a call with Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), he repeated those assertions, Ryan said.

In fact, three days earlier, Capitol police had told the Pentagon that it was not requesting National Guard support for the event, according to defense officials. And when masses of Trump supporters began pushing against the limited barricades around the Capitol, the agency's officers were rapidly overrun.

Sund, who is set to resign in days, has not responded to phone messages, emails or notes left at his home. In a statement issued before the news of his resignation, Sund said Capitol Police had a "robust plan established to address anticipated First Amendment activities." He acknowledged that the force had not prepared for the violent mob that came instead. "The violent attack on the U.S. Capitol was unlike any I have ever experienced in my 30 years in law enforcement here in Washington, D.C."

Stenger, the Senate sergeant at arms, and Irving, his counterpart on the House side, both also resigned under pressure from lawmakers.

On the move

On the morning of the rally, lawmakers and their aides on their way to work passed a smattering of protesters around the Capitol. Many held or wore blue and red Trump 2020 flags and yellow-and-green "Don't Tread on Me" banners. Homemade signs with QAnon symbols dotted the Mall. Most protesters were walking west toward the White House, near where Trump planned to address the crowd.

Inside their offices, lawmakers prepared for Republicans to force a marathon day — perhaps 12 hours or more of floor debate — before formalizing Biden's victory.

By around 1 p.m., as the joint session began, the mood in the crowd outside began to shift. Trump had just given a one-hour speech to thousands of supporters amassed on the Ellipse near the White House, excoriating his enemies and reiterating his baseless claims of fraud. GOP lawmakers, he emphasized, needed to take a stand.

"We're going to the Capitol," he said. "We're going to try and give them the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country."

The president added: "If you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore."

Trump returned to the White House; he did not go to Capitol Hill. But his supporters began streaming east along Pennsylvania Avenue.

They first reached the west side of the building — several blocks away from the area that Sund had told lawmakers was the designated protest area.

The crowd grew 10 deep, then 20 deep as the soon-to-be rioters spilled in along all sides of the Capitol. In many places, a line of waist-high, movable metal barriers was all that separated protesters from clumps of police and the building.

The crowd never stopped advancing. Some picked up the barriers and carried them, creating gaping holes for rioters to close in toward the stage being erected for Biden's inauguration.

Before 1:30 p.m., Lofgren heard from staff that a wall of people had been able to push into the iconic Capitol steps on the west side. Through the windows of the House chamber, Lofgren's aides could see outside that a ragtag group of rioters had been able to climb atop the risers and the platforms.

Neither Lofgren nor her staff could reach the Capitol police chief on the phone, she later recounted.

Irving, who was in the House chamber, assured Lofgren that things would be fine. Protesters would be kept outside. The doors were all locked, he told her. "Nobody can get in," Irving said.

A seeming fortress from a distance, the Capitol contains more than 400 separate doors, entryways and ground-level windows. And police lines on all sides of the building were collapsing.

Waters placed an urgent call to Sund, who was at Capitol police headquarters two blocks away, two law enforcement officials said.

Protesters were already crossing the plaza. "What are you going to do about it?" Waters asked. "We're doing the best we can," came Sund's reply, she said, and then the line went dead.

Waters was unsure if the call had dropped or if Sund hung up. She turned to a staffer: "That's not a plan."

On the other end of the building and a floor below, alarm was growing among senior congressional staffers crowding into the office of Stenger, the head of security for the Senate.

His House colleague, Irving, was placing a call to a law enforcement association that can organize mutual aid from county and state police forces in suburban Maryland and Virginia, according to people in the room. The request was brand new, and it would take an hour or two for any officers to arrive. Irving was told. A Democratic aide and a

brand new, and it would take an hour or two for any officers to arrive, Irving was told. A Democratic aide and a Republican one in the room looked at each other in surprise.

At that point, Irving began talking about bringing in the National Guard. While a few hundred D.C. National Guard members had been activated and were elsewhere in the city, the two aides realized there was no arrangement to pre-stage military assets to help at the Capitol.

In fact, a small quick-reaction force at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland had been assembled by the Defense Department to assist if needed — but it did not immediately respond because of a lack of a prior planning with Capitol police over how it might be deployed, Pentagon officials said.

Outside on the west side of the building, a handful of Capitol police officers had been backed into a corner, under the scaffolding holding up the inaugural stage. One was pulled down a set of stairs and then beaten and kicked while he tried to cover his head, according to footage of the incident.

Atop the stairs, another had his helmet ripped off as he tried to hold up the last remaining metal barrier before the crowd could flood into the building. A person in the mob sprayed something at an officer. Another lifted a hammer above his head as if preparing to throw it, and then instead began striking at the barrier, where officers were holding it with their hands.

Shortly before 2 p.m., rioters were on all sides of the building. They waved Trump flags from landings and porticos, while the most violent and those armed with pipes, rocks and other objects trained on the many doors and windows.

One used a police shield to break a window. A rioter jumped through, followed by others who either used the window or nearby doors.

On the second floor, Lofgren could see the mob encircling a landing. She didn't yet know protesters were inside.

She again turned to Irving — what was going on? He said the National Guard was on its way.

In fact, Sund had just requested National Guard support from the Defense Department. It would be hours before they would arrive.

A moment later, the thunderous sounds of banging at exterior doors around the House side gave way to a crash of window glass and then shouts from rioters who had breached a second side of the building.

At 2:14 p.m., Rep. Paul A. Gosar (R-Ariz.) had begun his speech objecting to Arizona's electoral college results. As he spoke, Pelosi's protective detail agents hustled her away.

Moments later, there was yelling in the gallery, as staff and security details started to move around with a heightened sense of alarm.

Inside the chamber, news photographers that Pelosi (D-Calif.) had allowed in to capture the historic electoral vote at the dais instead turned around and trained their cameras toward the doors in the back of the chamber.

As lawmakers were ushered out another side of the chamber, plainclothes Capitol Police officers dragged a desk to use as a barricade in front of the door that presidents enter to deliver the annual State of the Union address.

On the other side, rioters began breaking small windows. The officers inside drew their guns.

Lawmakers inside were still being evacuated when, around a side entrance, the mob came much closer to breaking their way onto the House floor — less than 10 feet away from an open door into the chamber.

Dozens of rioters pressed against police trying to block their entry into the Speaker's Lobby, as captured on a video The Post obtained.

Several officers left their post seconds before much heavily armed reinforcements showed up. But in those few seconds, the rioters smashed in the windows of the doors to the Speaker's Lobby and were on the verge of entering the House chamber.

"There's a gun! There's a gun!' one rioter screamed, then an officer fired into the crowd.

Trump supporter and Air Force veteran Ashli Babbitt, a 35-year-old California native, was killed.

The intruders ran around the back hallways of the second floor, weaving in and out of the Senate majority leader and House speaker's adjoining suites, and entering the sanctum of the two most powerful figures in Congress like the halls were their playground.

Eight Pelosi staffers trapped inside their suite barricaded themselves inside a staff conference room, and huddled together under the table in the middle, hoping that the protesters who had already broken down one door — and were rummaging through materials and shooting selfies with their feet up on an executive assistant's desk — wouldn't make it any farther inside.

Calls for help

At 2:11 p.m. on the Senate side, Vice President Pence sat in the chair of the presiding officer when aides started motioning to Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) that he had to replace him. The vice president hurried out a door.

At that moment, one floor below, rioters had crashed through windows and climbed into the Capitol and clashed with police, including a lone Black Capitol police officer who tried to prevent them from ascending toward the Senate chamber.

A video captured by Igor Bobic, a congressional reporter for HuffPost on the scene, shows the officer trying to hold back a few dozen rioters who push him back and up the steps leading almost directly to the chamber.

For almost a minute, the officer held them back — at the exact moment that, inside the Senate, police were frantically racing around the chamber trying to lock down more than a dozen doors leading to the chamber floor and the galleries above.

"Second floor!" the officer yelled into his radio, alerting other officers and command that the mob had reached the precipice of the Senate.

Had the rioters turned right, they would have been a few feet away from the main entrance into the chamber. On the other side of that door, had they made their way into the Senate, were at least a half-dozen armed officers, including

one with a semiautomatic weapon in the middle of the floor scanning each entrance for intruders.

Instead, the group — all White men — followed the Black officer in the other direction and met a group of police in a back corridor outside the Senate.

At 2:16 p.m., Bobic tweeted a photo of a half-dozen police confronting the protesters.

According to the contemporaneous notes of a Washington Post reporter inside the chamber, it was mere seconds of a differential: "2:15 p.m., Senate sealed."

Back in the barricaded room with McConnell aides, one staffer began snapping photos through a window. They could see Trump supporters streaming toward the building — and just four police officers.

Outside the door, the intruders kept coming, as if running laps, trying to open doors. The McConnell aides heard a woman praying loudly outside their door for "the evil of Congress to be brought to an end."

Calls for help were going out as fast as people could text and dial.

The senior McConnell adviser reached a former law firm colleague who had just left the Justice Department: Will Levi, who had served as Attorney General William P. Barr's chief of staff.

They needed help — now, he told Levi.

From his home, Levi immediately called FBI Deputy Director David Bowdich, who was in the command center in the FBI's Washington Field Office.

Capitol police had lost control of the building, Levi told Bowdich.

The FBI official had been hearing radio traffic of aggressive protesters pushing through the perimeter, but Levi said it had gone even further: The mob had already crashed the gates and lives were at risk.

Capitol police had said previously they didn't need help, but Bowdich decided he couldn't wait for a formal invitation.

He dispatched the first of three tactical teams, including one from the Washington field office to secure the safety of U.S. senators and provide whatever aid they could. He instructed two more SWAT teams to follow, including one that raced from Baltimore.

These teams typically gather at a staging area off-site to coordinate and plan, and then rush together to the area where they are needed. Bowdich told their commander there was no time.

"Get their asses over there. Go now," he said to the first team's commander. "We don't have time to huddle."

From their secure locations, meanwhile, Pelosi, House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.) and Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) made calls for help to acting attorney general Jeffrey Rosen, D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan (R) and Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam (D).

"Ralph, there's glass being broken around me," Northam recalled Pelosi saying. "I've heard there's been gunfire. We're just very, very concerned right now.'"

Amid the mayhem, a large group of senators were secretly led to a room in a Senate office building. Stenger was with them, and the furious lawmakers peppered him with questions.

"How does this happen? How does this happen?" demanded Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.)

Stenger could not muster much of an answer, practically inaudible as he dispiritedly debriefed the senators. "He was talking in circles," Graham thought to himself.

Sen. Joe Manchin III, D-W.Va., called Stenger's attempt to field that question "absolutely pathetic" and further reduced confidence in the room. As Graham pressed for a better explanation, Stenger's voice got weaker and smaller.

"Here's your mission: Take back the Senate," Graham told Stenger. "Whatever you need to do, do it. We're not leaving this place. We're not going to be run out by a mob."

Finally, the Senate sergeant at arms sat down amid the others in the room, saying to no one in particular: "I wish I had just retired last week."

McConnell was determined to get back to the floor. "We are going back tonight" to finish the vote to formalize the election, he said at one point. "The thugs won't win."

By 6 p.m., a perimeter around the Capitol was secured.

A few hours later, shaken lawmakers filed back in, surrounded by the wreckage of the day's attack: smashed windows, splintered furniture, a bust of President Zachary Taylor smeared with what appeared to be blood. They went back to work. At 3:42 a.m. Thursday, Pence affirmed Biden's victory as the next president.

Correction: An earlier version of this story erroneously described a call that Senate Sergeant at arms Michael Stenger made to a law enforcement association seeking support for the Capitol Police on Wednesday afternoon. In fact, it was his House colleague Paul Irving who made the call.

Seung Min Kim, Dan Lamothe, Laura Vozzella, Alice Crites and Julie Tate contributed to this report.

Updated January 16, 2021

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The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

The conservative case for impeaching Trump now

When the chief executive of the federal government incites an attack on the legislature, party differences should fall away

By **Keith E. Whittington**
Keith E. Whittington, a professor of politics at Princeton University, is the author of "Constitutional Construction: Divided Powers and Constitutional Meaning."

Jan. 7, 2021 at 5:11 p.m. EST

Three presidents have been impeached. None has been convicted and removed from office. No president has been impeached twice. President Trump should be impeached for a second time, and this time the Senate should convict him of high crimes and misdemeanors. This is not, if it ever was, a partisan issue. I have come to this conclusion as a conservative-leaning libertarian and member — like Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) and Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) — of the Federalist Society, and having spent much of my academic career studying both originalism and impeachments. Those who say they care about faithfully preserving constitutional principles and sustaining the workings of the Madisonian system of checks and balances must be willing to adhere to those commitments even when they are politically inconvenient.

I do not come to this lightly. During the Ukraine controversy, I thought there might still be options other than impeachment for curbing the president. Such steps were never taken, and the president was only emboldened by his acquittal. His recent actions have been far worse, and the crisis is more pressing.

As numerous current and former government officials have recognized, the president bears a substantial share of the responsibility for the riot that engulfed the U.S. Capitol building. Sen. Mitt Romney (R-Utah) accurately called it an "an insurrection, incited by the President of the United States." Conservatives and liberals should be able to unite as one in denouncing the encouragement of a violent attack on the national legislature. They should be able to take immediate action when it is the chief executive of the federal government who is the one encouraging such violence.

There are certainly risks with rushing forward with an impeachment. A second failed impeachment would only embolden Trump and his supporters again, sending the message to the American people that Congress will not take difficult actions even to defend its own house from mob violence. So far, a conviction seems unlikely but not impossible: Finally realizing the damage that the president has done, Republicans in the Senate are breaking from him. Just before the mob attack on Congress, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) warned that what Trump was urging would "damage our republic forever." The Republican Senate overwhelmingly rejected Trump's bid to overturn the results of the presidential election, with even Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.), a close ally of Trump, declaring that "enough is enough."

Others, including Sen. Patrick J. Toomey (R-Pa.), have placed the blame for bloodshed in the Capitol on "a demagogue" who "chose to spread falsehoods and sow distrust." Given that political support for the president is

dissipating even within the administration itself, as evidenced by the resignations of the first lady's chief of staff and the secretary of transportation, a sufficient number of Republican senators might understand the virtue of decisively separating themselves from Trump and Trumpism.

Since Congress is adjourned until Jan. 20, Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) has called on the House and the Senate to reconvene to begin the impeachment process. As the gravity of this week's events sinks in, support for that proposal may grow. (Some scholars also believe a president might be impeached after he leaves office; if that should happen, Trump would at least be barred from holding future offices of trust.)

From before he was elected president, Trump spread conspiracy theories (like birtherism) and subverted faith in American democratic institutions. But as his own reelection approached, and especially in the weeks since he lost that bid for reelection, the president has recklessly escalated his public attacks on our electoral processes. Finally, when the counting of the electoral ballots and the formal announcement of the victory of President-elect Joe Biden was at hand, Trump's inflammatory rhetoric landed in a tinderbox. When he sent that crowd to march to the Capitol, telling them that "you'll never take back our country with weakness," violence was a predictable result.

The impeachment power is available to Congress to address the possibility of a federal officer, particularly the president, posing an immediate threat to the safety of the country. Trump made clear this month that he poses such a threat. A sitting president who would incite a mob to lay siege to the chambers of Congress; disrupt the counting of the electoral votes that would initiate the transfer of presidential power; persist in refusing to concede his own electoral loss; and persist in telling his supporters that American elections are rigged threatens the continuity and stability of democratic government.

The president has shown no remorse for his actions (instead, he called the events the inevitable result of a stolen election), and there is no reason to think that he would not do the same again. With a speedy impeachment, Trump would be disarmed and safely isolated. Congress would be sending the message to future political leaders, and to the American citizenry, that such behavior is intolerable. The impeachment power allows Congress to define and enforce the outermost boundaries of acceptable political behavior; it should be an uncontroversial proposition, crossing party lines, that inciting violence against the legislature is beyond the pale.

The president might not have committed a criminal offense in the run-up to the riot. That judgment is for the criminal justice system to make after he leaves office. The president might not have abused his formal powers of office with his speeches and his tweets or seized powers that he does not lawfully possess. Nonetheless, his offenses are of a "political character," of the sort that Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story said the impeachment power existed to address. They threaten the workings of American democracy. The president has, in the words of Alexander Hamilton, acted in grave "violation of some public trust."

Impeachment is often a slow process, but it need not be. The president's actions were done in public and are plain to all. The House members do not need to engage in an investigation of the facts; they merely need to evaluate the facts that are already before them. The Senate must offer the president an opportunity to defend himself from the charges contained in the articles of impeachment, but a Senate trial need be neither delayed nor long. The president could be impeached, convicted and removed from office in a day.

Many will be tempted to just wait out Trump's final days in office. But this week's events demonstrate that he cannot be safely trusted to continue to exercise the powers of that office for even another week. The 25th Amendment, which also allows for the removal of the president, is not the appropriate remedy, because the problem is not that the president is incapacitated. The problem is that he is a danger to the republic. Only the House and the Senate acting through the impeachment power have the authority to make that judgment.

The dangers of a failed impeachment are clear. If the Senate votes not to punish a president who revels in an assault on the Capitol, future demagogues will take note. If the votes simply aren't there — a sad prospect — it might be better to keep a watchful eye over the sitting president, and perhaps condemn his actions through a resolution of censure, rather than once again tell him that he is untouchable.

After the Trump presidency, it will be a long and difficult task to restore balance and integrity to our constitutional system. That begins by emphatically reaffirming the most basic expectations of how a president should conduct himself. The power of impeachment is a tool for reestablishing constitutional principles that have come under assault. They are under assault now.

Updated January 10, 2021

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The MAGA Insurrection in the Capitol Created a Huge New National-Security Threat

thedailybeast.com/the-maga-insurrection-in-the-capitol-created-a-huge-new-national-security-threat

January 7, 2021

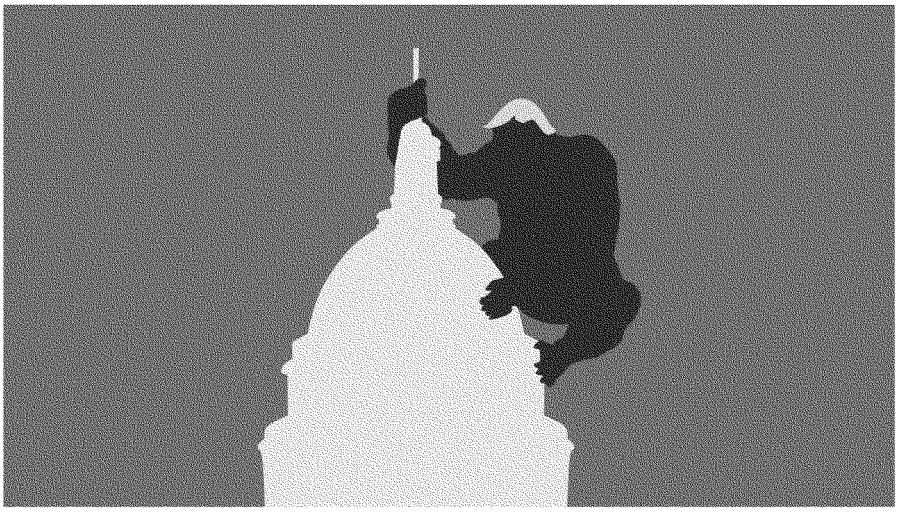


Illustration by Elizabeth Brockway/The Daily Beast

Bottom line: Any Washington-based foreign spy who was not in this crowd by the time they got removed from the Capitol deserves to be fired by their government.

Kel McClanahan

Updated Jan. 08, 2021 12:20PM ET / Published Jan. 07, 2021 12:17PM ET

The United States Capitol was invaded on Wednesday. Countless rioters wandered the halls of government without supervision. Members of Congress and their staff were evacuated so quickly that computers were left on with windows open and unlocked. Rioters took pictures of themselves sitting behind the desks of some of the most powerful people in our government.

For the next 3½ hours, the Capitol Police basically watched it happen. They were *embarrassingly* outnumbered and arguably had no way to exert any meaningful degree of control over the matter. They prioritized protecting the members of Congress, but they

obviously could not be everywhere.

After hours in which the rioters were being publicly encouraged to leave, and even told by the police to leave, an announcement was made that the invaders had been purged from the Capitol building and things were now safe again. This was exactly the wrong thing to do. Instead of chasing them out the door, the police should've locked the doors and arrested everyone inside. Not to punish them (although they definitely deserved it), but to discover who they were and what they were up to.

Hundreds of people, none of whom were searched, wandering the U.S. Capitol, which contains a huge number of convenient places to hide a bomb (and two pipe bombs were actually found at other Capitol Hill locations). Hundreds of people wandering around with their smartphone cameras capturing every detail of the building, whether they're publicly accessible or not. Hundreds of people, none of whom were searched, with direct access to electronics, computers, and networks.

It's a cybersecurity truism that if you have physical access to the machine, you own the machine. Applying that to computers with direct access to the congressional networks is terrifying.

A computer used by Nancy Pelosi's staff or someone in the Gang of Eight presents the most serious immediate threat. While an intruder would not be able to access classified material on any of those computers or the default shared resources, they would have access to basically all of the leadership's deliberative material, emails, employee personnel files, privileged files, and even protected whistleblower disclosures, and likely quick access to personal accounts the computer's owner has accessed while in the office such as banking or Amazon, which may default to logged in and using a password manager to make access easy (which would allow for future coercion). Most importantly, you do not need extended access to the computer if you came prepared; a USB drive surreptitiously stuck into a machine with malicious code on it is the *least* sophisticated of numerous possible options for a bad actor to maintain extended access and control long after they have nonchalantly walked out the front door. It can even be done by accessing networking hubs or even cables if you have the right tools.

This is not a hypothetical threat either. A laptop was stolen from the office of Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), who sits on the powerful (and exceedingly relevant to foreign adversaries) Senate Appropriations and Foreign Relations Committees.

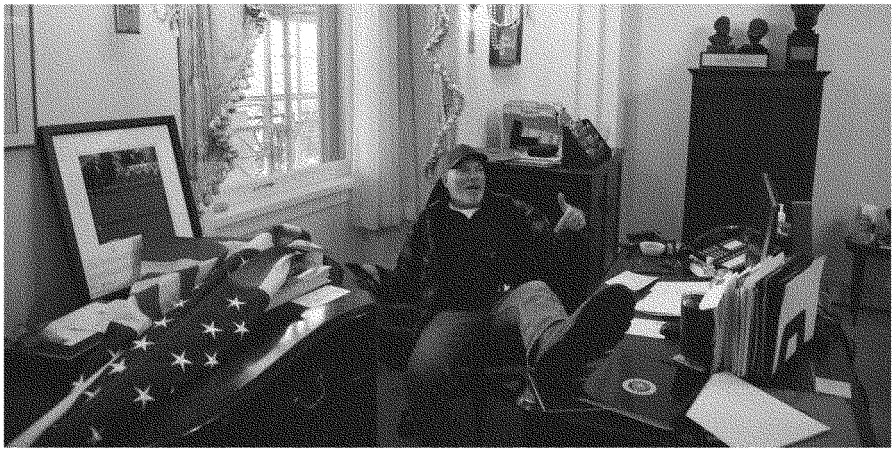
Bottom line: Any Washington based foreign spy who was not in this crowd by the time they got removed from the Capitol deserves to be fired by their government. Locating surreptitious devices that could be attached to any electronic device in the building is going to be a logistical nightmare orders of magnitude more complex than searching for incendiary devices. Add in the need to look for malicious code and it will be months before Congress can be truly safe again.

Less if the rioters had been detained, interrogated, and searched. But they weren't. When the inevitable commission is formed to review the events of this tragic day, I only hope that they seriously consider what happens when almost a thousand people invade a government space and less than 50 are arrested. This is the counterintelligence cost of a passive response, and we'll be paying it for some time.

DOW -0.77% S&P 500 -0.82% NASDAQ 100 -0.8%

The rioter who took photos at Nancy Pelosi's desk and recently said he's a white nationalist prepared for a violent death has been arrested

Kelly McLaughlin Jan 8, 2021, 2:19 PM



A supporter of US President Donald Trump sits in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office during the riot at the US Capitol on Wednesday. SAUL LOEB/AFP via Getty Images

The man, who first identified himself as Richard Barnett from Gravette, Arkansas, in an interview with a New York Times reporter, said on Facebook last week that he was a white nationalist.

Barnett had previously raised money for a cause backed by QAnon, and he told local news outlets in Arkansas that he believed the presidential election was stolen from Trump.

He was arrested on charges of entering and remaining on restricted grounds, violent entry, and theft of public property.

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A man who was pictured sitting at House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's desk as rioters who support President Donald Trump stormed the US Capitol building on Wednesday has been arrested.

Barnett was arrested at his home in Little Rock, Arkansas, on charges of entering and remaining on restricted grounds, violent entry, and theft of public property. If convicted, he faces a year in prison.

Federal officials said he would be extradited to Washington, DC.

"The shocking images of Mr. Barnett with his boots up on a desk in the Speaker of the House's office on Wednesday was repulsive," Jeffrey A. Rosen, Acting Attorney General of the United States, said in a statement about Barnett's arrest. "Those who are proven to have committed criminal acts during the storming of the Capitol will face justice."

Days before the riot, Barnett had recently said he was a white nationalist who's prepared for a violent death on a Facebook page he maintained under the pseudonym "George Reincarnated Patton" after the World War II general, The Washington Post reported.

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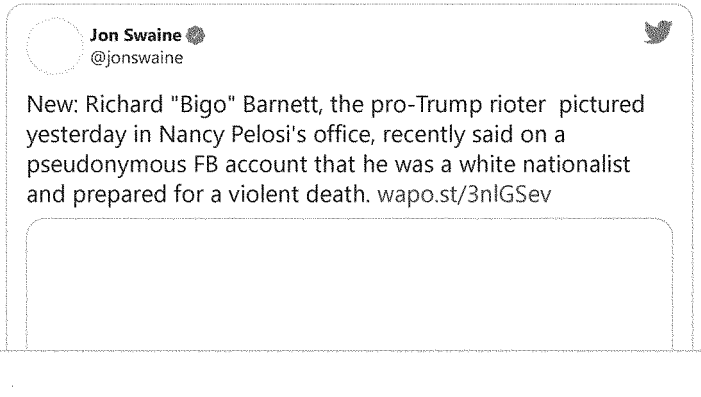
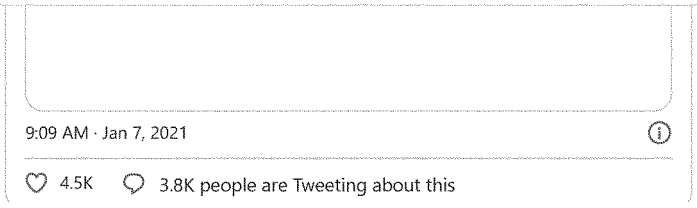
aren't. Then get the f--- out of our nation."

In a post from December, Barnett said he "came into this world kicking and screaming, covered in someone else's blood" and that he was "not afraid to go out the same way," The Post reported.

Barnett's Facebook account has since been locked or removed, but the Post reporter Jon Swaine posted screenshots on Twitter:





Barnett, 60, who goes by "Bigo," spoke to New York Times reporter Matthew Rosenberg outside the Capitol after he visited Pelosi's desk.
He told Rosenberg that he took a personalized envelope that belonged to Pelosi and "left a quarter on her desk."

"I didn't steal it. I bled on it, because they were f---ing macing me and I couldn't f---ing see," Barnett said in a video that Rosenberg posted in Twitter. "And so I figure, well, I'm in her office, I got blood in her office, I'll put a quarter on her desk, even though she ain't f---ing worth it."

Barnett also said he wrote her a "nasty note." Photos showed a note on Pelosi's desk

Eagle Observer, which reported that in October he raised more than $1,000 for a "Save our Children" anti-trafficking campaign. The campaign has been propagated by followers of QAnon, a conspiracy-theory organization that shares misinformation about child sex trafficking.

Barnett also attended a "Stop the Steal" rally in support of Trump in Arkansas in November, and he told KNWA, a local news station, that he believed voter fraud cost Trump the presidential election.

He told KNWA on Wednesday that he wasn't arrested at the riot but was escorted out of the Capitol after being tear-gassed. He also said he and his family had received multiple threats.

The Capitol was secured on Wednesday night, and Congress completed its certification of President-elect Joe Biden's victory over Trump.

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gathered to certify Biden's win

Some among America's military allies believe Trump deliberately attempted a coup and may have had help from federal law enforcement officials

As rioters stormed the Capitol, Trump was reportedly telling people he was glad Perdue and Loeffler lost their Georgia Senate seats, calling them not loyal enough

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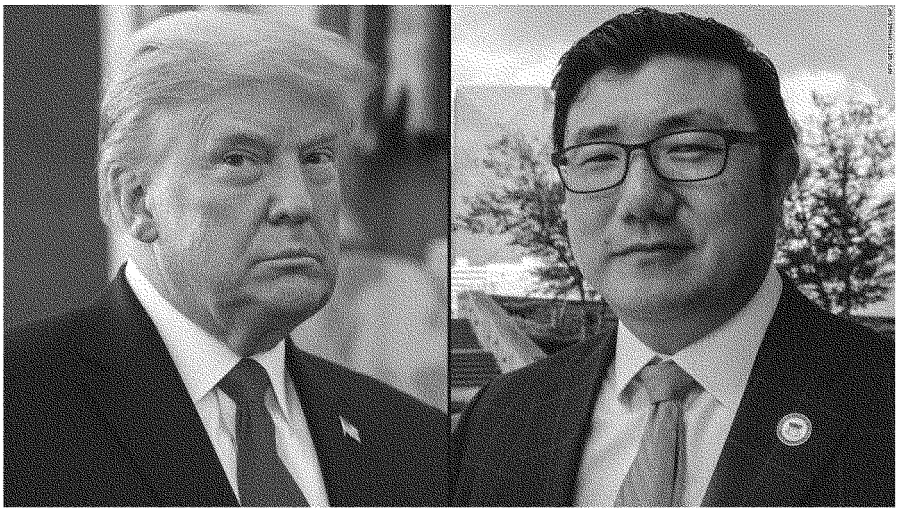
Wall Street Journal: White House pressured Georgia federal prosecutor to resign

cnn.com/2021/01/09/politics/white-house-trump-georgia-us-attorney-resigns/index.html

January 9, 2021



*(CNN)*White House officials pressured a top Georgia federal prosecutor to resign ahead of the state's high stakes Senate runoff elections because President Donald Trump was upset he wasn't pursuing Trump's baseless allegations of widespread election fraud strongly enough, according to The Wall Street Journal.

The Journal, citing people familiar with the matter, reported Saturday that a senior Justice Department official called Trump-appointed US Attorney Byung J. Pak at the White House's request. The official told Pak he needed to resign because he wasn't investigating the allegations to Trump's liking, the Journal reported.
The day before Georgians headed to the polls, Pak abruptly submitted his resignation, citing "unforeseen circumstances" as his reason for departure in an email to his colleagues.

Trump pressured Georgia elections investigator to 'find the fraud' in 2020 election
The revelation marks yet another effort by Trump to attempt to pressure a Georgia government employee to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's win in the state. CNN reported earlier Saturday that the President in December urged the chief investigator for the Georgia secretary of state's office to "find the fraud" in the 2020 presidential election, telling the individual that they would be a "national hero," according to a source with knowledge of the call.

As CNN has previously reported, there have been no credible allegations of any issues with voting that would have impacted the election, as affirmed by dozens of judges, governors, election officials, the Electoral College, the Justice Department, the Department of Homeland Security, and the US Supreme Court.

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Barry Paschale, the public affairs officer of the Southern District of Georgia, confirmed to CNN Saturday that Bobby Christine had been named acting US attorney for the Northern District of Georgia.

According to the Journal, Christine, a Trump appointee, assumed those duties in addition to his role in the Southern District, instead of the No. 2 in Pak's office taking over in an acting capacity, as is typically the case.

Paschale declined to comment to CNN aside from confirming Christine's appointment.

Congress formally certified Biden's win earlier this week following a riot of the US Capitol. Following the violent attack on the capitol, Trump said in a video that "a new administration will be inaugurated on January 20."

But in a phone call in early December, first reported by the Post, Trump had tried convincing Georgia Republican Gov. Brian Kemp to get state legislators to overturn Biden's win in the state.

And in a January 2 phone call obtained by CNN and first reported by The Washington Post, Trump urged Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" votes to overturn the election results.

In excerpts from that stunning one-hour phone call, Trump lambasted his fellow Republican for refusing to falsely say that he won the election in Georgia and repeatedly touted baseless claims of election fraud.

Raffensperger rejected Trump's claims replying in part, "We believe that we do have an accurate election."

A week before, Trump had phoned the Peach State's chief election investigator pushing the individual to "find the fraud."

CNN's Jason Hoffman, Evan Perez, Devan Cole, Jason Morris and Chandelis Duster contributed to this report.

NATIONAL SECURITY

FBI probing if foreign governments, groups funded extremists who helped execute Capitol attack

As part of the investigation, the FBI is examining payments of $500,000 in bitcoin to key figures and groups in the alt-right before the Jan. 6 riot.



— Pro-Trump protesters clash with police in Washington on Jan. 6, 2021. Shannon Stapleton / Reuters file

Jan. 16, 2021, 6:10 PM EST

By Ken Dilanian

WASHINGTON – The FBI is investigating whether foreign governments, organizations or individuals provided financial support to extremists who helped plan and execute the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, one current and one former FBI official told NBC News.

As part of the investigation, the bureau is examining payments of $500,000 in bitcoin, apparently by a French national, to key figures and groups in the alt-right before the riot, the sources said. Those payments were documented and posted on the web this week by a company that analyzes cryptocurrency transfers. Payments of bitcoin, a cryptocurrency, can be traced because they are documented on a public ledger.

Separately, a joint threat assessment issued this week by the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security and various other federal and D.C.-area police agencies noted that since the Jan. 6 riot, "Russian, Iranian, and Chinese influence actors have seized the opportunity to amplify narratives in furtherance of their policy interest amid the presidential transition."

FBI investigating whether foreign groups funded extremists who executed Capitol attack



Russian state and proxy media outlets "have amplified themes related to the violent and chaotic nature of the Capitol Hill incident, impeachment of President Trump, and social media censorship," the unclassified intelligence report said. "In at least one instance, a Russian proxy claimed that ANTIFA members disguised themselves as supporters of President Trump, and were responsible for storming the Capitol building."

Chinese media, meanwhile, "have seized the story to denigrate U.S. democratic governance, casting the United States as broadly in decline – and to justify China's crackdown on protestors in Hong Kong."

The examination of possible foreign influence related to the Capitol riot, which involves the FBI's Counterintelligence Division, comes after years of what current and former FBI officials say is mounting evidence that Russia and other foreign adversaries have sought to secretly support political extremists on the far right and far left.

Defending democracy: The men and woman protecting the U.S. Capitol



Law enforcement officials and terrorism experts say there has long been "a mutual affection between Western white supremacists and the Russian government," as two scholars put it in a February paper on the JustSecurity web site.

Some senators were concerned enough about the issue that they inserted a requirement in the 2021 defense bill that the Pentagon "report to Congress on the extent of Russian support for 'racially and ethnically motivated violent extremist groups and networks in Europe and the United States' – and what can be done to counter it."

The current FBI official told NBC News that the bureau did not necessarily suspect Russian involvement in the bitcoin transfers, which appear to have been made by a French computer programmer who died by suicide on Dec. 8 after triggering the transfers, according to French media.

Far-right extremists are now 'recalibrating & planning' on an app favored by ISIS



But the cryptocurrency payments prompted the FBI to examine whether any of the money was used to find illegal acts, which, if true, raises the possibility of money laundering and conspiracy charges, the FBI official said.

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Iran jails U.S. businessman, possibly jeopardizing Biden's plans for diplomacy with Tehran

On Dec. 8, Chainalysis reported, the donor sent 28.15 BTC – worth about $522,000 at the time of transfer – to 22 separate addresses, many of which belong to far-right activists.

The Chainalysis blog post, first highlighted by Yahoo News, said far-right podcaster Nick Fuentes received the most money, 13.5 BTC – worth approximately $250,000.

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Fuentes, who spoke at pro-Trump rallies last year in Michigan and Washington, D.C., told the ProPublica news organization that he was at the "Stop the Steal" rally on Wednesday but didn't follow the mob into the Capitol.

One group of Fuentes' supporters, which calls itself the Groyper Army, was filmed running through the Capitol carrying a large blue flag with the America First logo, ProPublica reported.

"We're looking at and treating this just like a significant international counterterrorism or counterintelligence operation," Michael Sherwin, the U.S. attorney in D.C., said at a news briefing last week.

"We're looking at everything: Money, travel records, looking at disposition, movement, communication records."



Ken Dilanian

Ken Dilanian is a correspondent covering intelligence and national security for the NBC News Investigative Unit.

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CRIME & COURTS

FBI, NYPD told Capitol Police about possibility of violence before riot, senior officials say

The FBI visited more than a dozen extremists before the rally last week to urge them not to travel to D.C., senior law enforcement officials said.



— A rioter smashes a window with a baseball bat at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday.
Stephanie Keith / Reuters

Jan. 10, 2021, 3:45 PM EST / Updated Jan. 10, 2021, 4:02 PM EST

By Ken Dilanian, Tom Winter, Jonathan Dienst and Andrew Blankstein

WASHINGTON – The FBI and the New York City Police Department passed information to U.S. Capitol Police about the possibility of violence during the protests Wednesday against the

counting of the Electoral College vote, and the FBI even visited more than a dozen extremists already under investigation to urge them not to travel to Washington, senior law enforcement officials said.

The previously unreported details undercut the assertion by a top FBI official that officials had no indication that violence was a possibility, and they add to questions about what intelligence authorities had reviewed before the Capitol riot, which led to the death of an officer and four other people, including a rioter who was shot and killed by police.

"Social media is just part of a full intelligence picture, and while there was First Amendment-protected activity on social media to include some people making threats, to this point, investigators have not found that there was an organized plot to access the Capitol," a senior FBI official said.

FBI, NYPD notified U.S. Capitol Police about possibility of violence during electoral vote count



It was immediately obvious after the Capitol was seized by a violent mob Wednesday that Capitol Police, whose job is to defend the facility and the lawmakers who work there, had completely misjudged the security threat. The chief of the force was quickly forced out of his job, as were other key legislative security officials.

As evidence mounts that some extremists had told the world what they had in mind through social media, questions are emerging about whether the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies took the postings seriously enough – and why, if they did, they didn't step in until well after the building was under attack.

Asked Friday whether the slow police response Wednesday was the result of an intelligence failure, the official who leads the FBI's Washington field office, Steven D'Antuono, said no. "There was no indication that there was anything [planned] other than First Amendment-protected activity," he said.

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Right-wing extremists vow to return to Washington for Joe Biden's inauguration

D.C. Police Chief Robert Contee said something similar Thursday, telling reporters, "There was no intelligence that suggested there would be a breach of the U.S. Capitol."

Ken Rapuano, the assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense, told reporters that the Justice Department and other law enforcement officials told the Defense Department repeatedly that they had no indications that there would be "significant violent protests."

But there were ample indications of potential violence.

— Tear gas is released into a crowd of protesters during clashes with Capitol Police during a riot at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday. Shannon Stapleton / Reuters

NBC News has reported that a digital flyer made public on Instagram and Facebook last month referred to what would happen as "Operation Occupy the Capitol."

On the fringe message board 8kun, which is popular with QAnon followers, users talked for weeks about a siege of the Capitol.

"You can go to Washington on Jan 6 and help storm the Capitol," an 8kun user said Tuesday, a day before the siege. "As many Patriots as can be. We will storm the government buildings, kill cops, kill security guards, kill federal employees and agents, and demand a recount."

Daniel J. Jones, president of Advance Democracy Inc., a global research organization that studies disinformation and extremism, told NBC News in a story published the day before the riot: "In regard to the protests planned for Jan. 6, the violent rhetoric we're seeing online is at a new level. There are endorsements of violence across all of the platforms."

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How could the FBI and other agencies have missed all that? It turns out they didn't, officials said.

"Prior to this event, the FBI obtained credible and actionable information about individuals who were planning on traveling to the protests who expressed a desire to engage in violence," the senior FBI official said. "The FBI was able to discourage those individuals from traveling to D.C."

Congress to investigate law enforcement handling of deadly Capitol breach



The official added that "the FBI and our federal, state and local partners collected and shared available intelligence in preparation for the various planned events."

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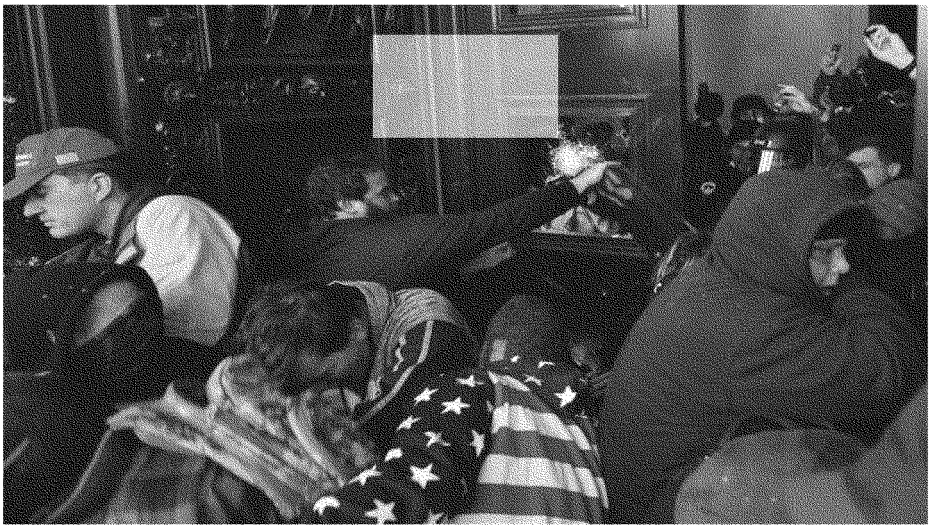
"The FBI was prepared to adapt as needed to fluid events on the ground, including having rapid response teams in reserve," the official said. "Throughout most of the day the crowd was peaceful and nonconfrontational.

"However, when it became clear that some individuals were surging onto the Capitol grounds and entering the buildings, the U.S. Capitol Police requested assistance. Within 50 minutes of that request, three FBI tactical teams were on scene to gain control of the area and offer protection to congressional members and staff. Over the course of the evening, the FBI presence ultimately grew to over 150 agents and other personnel."

The official wasn't in a position to explain why D'Antuono, the head of the Washington field office, said there had been no indications of violence.

Former FBI counterterrorism director: 'It's not over yet'



rally.

Law enforcement officials familiar with the intelligence assessments said President Donald Trump's exhortation of the crowd to march on the Capitol probably prompted a much larger contingent of people to head there than might otherwise have gone.

— Riot police push back a crowd of President Donald Trump's supporters after they stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday. Roberto Schmidt / AFP - Getty Images

Capitol Police and the FBI's Washington field office didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

It wasn't just police agencies that issued warnings. A private intelligence report issued in December, obtained by NBC News, said the "'million-MAGA march' in Washington DC on 6 January is the next major flashpoint ... the mass event (which will be held in the National Mall and outside the Capitol) is likely to spark street violence, some of which may be lethal, between Antifa and Trump supporters or far-right groups."

Many questions remain about why the FBI, Homeland Security and other agencies didn't do more to make sure the Capitol was protected. Officials have said Capitol Police reassured everyone that they could handle the situation, and key lawmakers said they heard the same assurances from the force.

The Metropolitan Police Department in Washington is responsible for crowd control in the city, and the mayor told Justice Department officials that she didn't want or need their help. While city police helped retake the Capitol, they were unable to stop the crowd from getting there in the first place.

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Pentagon, D.C. officials point fingers at each other over Capitol riot response

The FBI is also under scrutiny. Its top investigative priority is terrorism, foreign and domestic. Had this been an al Qaeda plot to storm the Capitol, some experts said, it is likely that the FBI would have arrested the participants before they left their home airports on the way to Washington.

One difference, however, is that there is no domestic terrorism statute, which gives the FBI fewer avenues to legally monitor suspects, including their postings on the dark web, said NBC News contributor Frank Figliuzzi, a former assistant director of the FBI.

Outside a criminal investigation of a specific person or group, Figliuzzi said Saturday, "the FBI is not permitted to look and monitor the very same things that you and I can look at on Twitter and Parler."

Joyce Vance, a former U.S. attorney for northern Alabama, said the FBI has tools to monitor potential violence by domestic extremists. She suggested that the issue was one of emphasis and will.

"The challenge for FBI and DOJ is to assign a permanent priority to domestic white supremacist terror groups and treat them as seriously as they treat foreign terrorism," she said.



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Julia Ainsley and Michael Kosnar contributed.

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Republican canvassers ask to 'rescind' their votes certifying Michigan election results

The Republicans said they initially felt pressured by the "public ostracism."

By **Kendall Karson, Katherine Faulders**, and **Will Steakin**
November 19, 2020, 12:12 PM • 9 min read

Biden warned Trump's avoidance to transition threatens COVID-19 efforts

*President-elect Joe Biden heard stories from frontline workers who described a lack of s..*Read More

Michigan's election certification process just got messier. The two Republicans on the Wayne County board of canvassers are now seeking to rescind their decision to certify their county's results, a day after the deadline, in a pair of affidavits signed late Wednesday night.

The evening before the two Republican canvassers on the Wayne County elections board signed the affidavits, President Donald Trump spoke with both Monica Palmer and William Hartmann on Tuesday after the second vote to certify the results, sources told ABC News.

Recent Stories from ABC News



It's not immediately clear if the latest move to reverse their votes was

discussed. ABC News has reached out to both Palmer and Hartmann.

Palmer, who is the chair of the board, told the Detroit Free Press that she spoke with the president about the threats to her safety.

"He was checking to make sure I was safe after seeing/hearing about the threats and doxxing," she said, without saying to the outlet if she discussed her decision on Wednesday to rescind her final vote.

The two GOP members on the county board of canvassers disavowed their decision to certify their county's results on Wednesday.

Both Palmer, the Republican chair of the county board, and Hartmann, a Republican member, said after they initially voted against certifying the results, they were "enticed" Tuesday into affirming the election results after they said they were given assurances by the board's vice chairman, Jonathan Kinloch, that the votes would be independently audited.

+ MORE: GOP state leaders brush off idea to hand Trump election by replacing electors

When asked late Tuesday night if she would commit to a comprehensive audit, Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, hedged and only said she would look into it. Kinlock confirmed to ABC News that he gave this assurance but added that he had been unable to reach the secretary of state on Tuesday night to get her commitment.

By Thursday, Benson confirmed plans for a statewide risk-limiting audit of the election and local performance audits of individual jurisdictions in a statement, adding that it was already in the works and not in response to "false" allegations of irregularities.



David Goldman/AP, FILE

*FILE - In this Nov. 7, 2020, file photo, Harjas Singh, 1, reaches out for his father, Umeet S...*Read More

A spokesperson for the secretary of state is shooting down the possibility of the two Republican members rescinding their vote, saying it is out of their hands at this point.

"There is no legal mechanism for them to rescind their vote," the

spokesperson said. "Their job is done and the next step in the process is for the Board of State Canvassers to meet and certify."

The number of votes at issue is too small to influence the outcome of the election. President-elect Joe Biden currently holds a substantial edge over Trump in Michigan, leading by nearly 150,000 votes, which is almost 15 times the president's margin over Hillary Clinton in 2016. In Wayne County, the state's largest, Biden is ahead by over 300,000 votes with nearly 70% of the vote.

Nevertheless, the two GOP members, suggesting that they feel misled, are now reverting to the earlier positions, arguing that they still have too many concerns about what they called "out of balance" precincts in Detroit, in which the number of votes cast and the number of voters signed in at the polls are mismatched, to certify. They both said that in their review of the results, more than 70% of Detroit's 134 poll books "were left unbalanced," -- which according to the Detroit News, also happened during the certification process in the August primary and the November 2016 election, but did not keep the board from certifying.

Benson said that the discrepancies are common clerical errors with the paperwork and not signs of irregularities in the vote tally, such as a voter spoiling a ballot, or showing up and then not voting.

+ MORE: Joe Biden defeats Donald Trump for president in bitter and historic election

"I rescind my prior vote to certify Wayne County elections," Palmer wrote in the affidavit.



David Goldman/AP, FILE

FILE - In this Nov. 4, 2020, file photo, a Republican election challenger at right watches... **Read More**

"I voted not to certify, and I still believe this vote should not be certified," Hartmann wrote in his affidavit. "Until these questions are addressed, I remain opposed to certification of the Wayne County results."

Kinloch, a Democrat, pushed back against this latest maneuver by his

Republican colleagues, saying that the vote to certify "is final."

"It is a wasted attempt to unravel a lawful vote, in order to calm the Republican rancor we all knew would occur after they left the meeting. This certification is secure from yellow belly politricks, which are trying to reverse Donald Trump's misfortune in Michigan," he told ABC News early Thursday morning. "Upon certifying the election, we took a subsequent vote to waive reconsideration of the certification vote. It is final, this goose is cooked."

It's not clear if the two Republican members officially signed any of the necessary paperwork to formalize their previous decision to certify.

"The two harassed patriot Canvassers refuse to sign the papers!" President Donald Trump tweeted Wednesday morning, an early sign of a possible fight over whether the GOP members signed documents related to the certification.

In addition to reaching out to the two Republican members of the board, ABC News has contacted the Wayne County board of elections to confirm that all four board members officially signed any necessary documents related to certifying the result but did not hear back as of Wednesday.

+ MORE: Key post-election certification deadlines and dates

On Tuesday, a chaotic few hours unfolded when Palmer and Hartmann initially refused to certify the county's election results, which was widely criticized as a partisan move, only to change their votes later that same night.

Kinloch described their initial vote against the certification as a highly

unusual move.

"It was totally out the norm for them to not certify, especially in an election that we know is as important as this one here," Kinloch said, adding that he believed "external forces" were at play. "This was an organized effort to disenfranchise," he added.

The Republicans said they felt pressured by the "public ostracism," as Hartmann put it, and by the threats against them and their family members, as Palmer wrote in her affidavit.

+ MORE: Trump challenges of election 'designed to damage and disenfranchise' says Pennsylvania lieutenant governor

"The public comment continued for over two hours and I felt pressured to continue the meeting without a break," Palmer wrote.

The unprecedented step to temporarily block the certification of results in Wayne County, which is home to Detroit, a city where Black residents make up nearly 80% of the population, prompted hours of public outrage from voters, volunteers, poll workers and local officials.

Benson announced on Wednesday, prior to the affidavits being filed, that all 83 counties certified the results. The state board of canvassers is set to meet on Nov. 23 to finalize the results statewide.

ABC News' Olivia Rubin contributed to this report.

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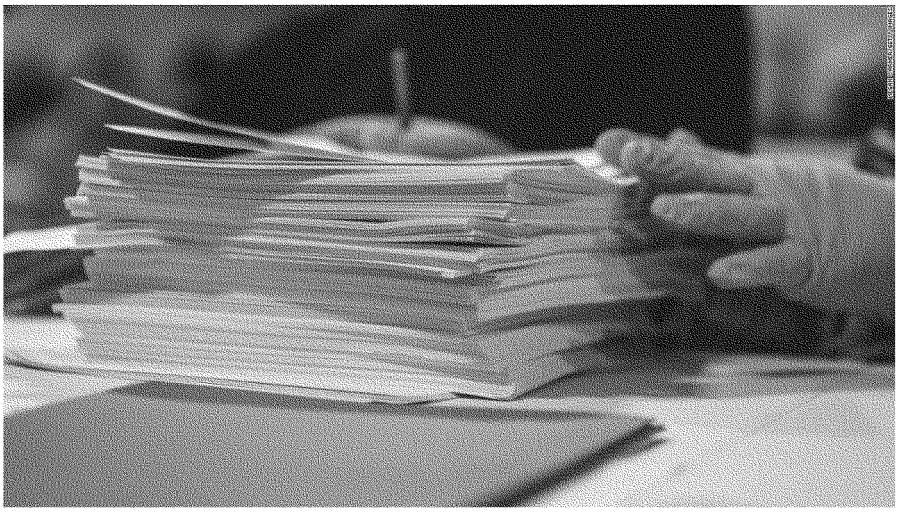
Trump campaign requests Georgia recount that's unlikely to change his loss in the state

cnn.com/2020/11/21/politics/georgia-presidential-election-recount/index.html

November 22, 2020



*(CNN)*Georgia will conduct another recount of its presidential ballots following a Trump campaign request Saturday, but the recount is extremely unlikely to change his loss in the state.

"Because the margin is still less than 0.5%, the President can request a recount after certification of the results. That recount will be conducted by rescanning all paper ballots," Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger had said in a statement on Friday after a state audit of the presidential results had been completed.

President-elect Joe Biden, who was declared the winner Friday as the state certified the results, has a 12,670 vote or .2% lead over President Donald Trump in Georgia.

MAP: See 2020 election results

Georgia already conducted an audit of the presidential ballots, meaning all ballots in the presidential race were counted a second time -- which was a defacto recount. The audit was more rigorous than the recount will be as the audit was a hand recount of every ballot, whereas the new recount will be done by a machine rescan.

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Georgia's pro-Trump election chief is now considered a pariah inside the GOP

Under Georgia law, the Trump campaign had two business days from Friday's certification to request the recount, which will be taxpayer-funded.

"Today, the Trump campaign filed a petition for recount in Georgia. We are focused on ensuring that every aspect of Georgia State Law and the U.S. Constitution are followed so that every legal vote is counted. President Trump and his campaign continue to insist on an honest recount in Georgia, which has to include signature matching and other vital safeguards," the Trump campaign said in a statement.

Georgia's GOP governor and secretary of state certify Biden win, quashing Trump's longshot attempt to overturn results

"Last week's recount reaffirmed what we already knew: Georgia voters selected Joe Biden to be their next president. As the Secretary of State said, there is no reason to believe there are widespread errors or fraud and the Trump campaign has no evidence to back up their baseless claims," said Jaclyn Rothenberg, the Georgia communications director for Biden's campaign. "Any further recount will simply reaffirm Joe Biden's victory in Georgia a third time."

Signature matching for mail-in ballots is not done in recounts, however, according to campaign law expert Jonathan Diaz, a CNN contributor. Comparing of signatures on envelopes of mail-in ballots to those on file is done earlier in the process. The Trump campaign was upset more ballots were not thrown out because of signature issues.

Diaz said "no recount is going to change" the margin of more than 12,000 votes.

"There's no real point in them doing so, other than to continue to drag out this process and cause further delays," Diaz said. "It is kind of nonsense," he said of the recount request. "The war is over."

This story has been updated to include additional context and a statement from the Biden campaign.

CORRECTION: An earlier version of this story incorrectly quoted campaign law expert Jonathan Diaz's comment about the recount request. Diaz said: "It is kind of nonsense."

CNN's Noah Broder, Morgan Rimmer and Marshall Cohen contributed to this report.

Defiant Trump denounces violence but takes no responsibility for inciting deadly riot

cnn.com/2021/01/12/politics/donald-trump-riot-impeachment/index.html

January 12, 2021



*(CNN)*A defiant President Donald Trump insisted Tuesday his speech inciting the riot at the US Capitol was "totally appropriate" while at the same time calling for "no violence" in his first public remarks to reporters after the insurrection last week.

Later, Trump likened attempts to impeach him for a second time to a "witch hunt" and baselessly warned that his successor, President-elect Joe Biden, might be removed from office himself.

Trump assumed no responsibility for what happened last Wednesday, despite telling his supporters in the hour beforehand to "fight like hell." And he did not specifically decry attempts to find and kill political leaders, including his own vice president.

Instead, speaking at the White House and later at Joint Base Andrews before departing for Texas, Trump suggested attempts by Democrats and tech companies to rein in his dangerous rhetoric could themselves lead to violence.

He falsely said those who'd analyzed his remarks before the deadly insurrection attempt had found no fault in them.

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"They've analyzed my speech, my words," he said. "Everybody to a T thought it was appropriate."

It was a characteristically belligerent stance for a President who enters his final week in office under looming threat of a second impeachment. As he has previously, Trump sought to deflect blame on Democrats and equivocated on his own role in fomenting dangerous behavior.
He claimed the "real problem" is what other politicians said about protests over the summer in Seattle and Portland, Oregon.
It was only in an aside that he said: "You always have to avoid violence."

Trump's disastrous end to his shocking presidency

Standing in front of a newly constructed stretch of border wall, Trump opened his speech by declaring: "Free speech is under assault like never before."
"The 25th Amendment is of zero risk to me, but will come back to haunt Joe Biden and the Biden administration," he said without evidence, referring to renewed talk of invoking the Constitution to remove him from office.
Only in a brief scripted portion of his speech did Trump appeal for "peace and calm."
"Now is the time for our nation to heal," he said, the sentiment entirely undercut by his attacks on Democrats and tech companies.
Earlier, as he departed the White House, the President denounced Democrats pursuing his historic second impeachment, seeming to imply they could provoke a violent response.
"This impeachment is causing tremendous anger, and you're doing it and it's really a terrible thing that they're doing," he told reporters on the White House South Lawn. "For Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer to continue on this path, I think it's causing tremendous danger to our country, and it's causing tremendous anger. I want no violence."
He similarly said the decisions by Twitter, Facebook and other platforms to suspend his accounts were causing fury among his supporters -- suggesting that could itself cause violence, and not his own language fanning violence among his base.
"It causes a lot of problems and a lot of anger," he said. "There's always a counter-move when they do that."
Trump's remarks on the White House South Lawn were his first in days and his first engagement with reporters in weeks.
He has isolated himself in the White House following riots at the US Capitol that he incited during a rally in the hour beforehand.
Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said on Tuesday that Trump's comments taking no responsibility for the attack on the Capitol were "despicable."
"What Trump did today, blaming others for what he caused, is a pathological technique used by the worst of dictators," said Schumer. "Trump causes the anger. He causes the divisiveness. He foments the violence and blames others for it. That is despicable."
Trump was slow to condemn the protests, which he watched on television from the dining room next to the Oval Office. He was convinced by advisers that a forceful denunciation of his own supporters was necessary, both because he was facing removal from office and because he faces potential legal questions about his role in inciting the riots.
Later, Trump appeared to some aides to regret taping a video in which he denounced the violence and conceded he would not be serving a second term in office.

Trump spent the weekend largely in isolation, as aides either distanced themselves from him or limited their time in his presence. Trump canceled a planned trip to Camp David, where his closest aides were hoping he would get into a good mindset ahead of his final stretch in office. Instead, he spent the weekend stewing to his deputy chief of staff, Dan Scavino, and entered his final full week angrier than ever.

Despite Trump's comments Tuesday, advisers and lawyers speaking with Trump in recent days have encouraged him to soften his rhetoric and denounce violence in order to reduce his legal liability for the deadly insurrection at the Capitol, two sources familiar with the discussions told CNN's Jim Acosta.

"Lawyers have been recommending a de-escalation of rhetoric, not just for the good of the country, but also to reduce the risk of legal jeopardy," one source familiar with the discussions said.

The sources said Trump has been told in the days following the siege at the Capitol that he could be charged with inciting violence by local and federal authorities and be sued by relatives of the victims who were harmed in the insurrection.

"He absolutely can be sued," a separate source said, reflecting concerns among Trump's advisers that the President's actions have once again put himself in legal jeopardy.

CNN's Jim Acosta and Alex Rogers contributed to this report.

Trump held multiple calls with Pennsylvania House speaker on state's electoral process

By Kevin Liptak, Jim Acosta and Paul LeBlanc, CNN
Updated 11:55 PM ET, Mon December 7, 2020



(CNN) — President Donald Trump spoke on multiple occasions over the past week with the speaker of the House in Pennsylvania about the Keystone State's election results, inquiring about their electoral process, a spokesman for the lawmaker said.

The House speaker, Republican Bryan Cutler, did not view the calls as an attempt to pressure him to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's win in the state, his spokesman Mike Straub told CNN.

Trump "never directly pressured Cutler to overturn the results or seat rival electors -- the conversations were briefings on the changes our state Supreme Court made to our state's election law, the impact of those interventions, and what steps are being taken now to challenge those changes," Straub said.

The Washington Post was first to report on Trump's calls with Cutler.



Related Article: Trump courts Michigan GOP leaders in bid to overturn election he lost

The President has made similar inquiries with Republican officials in Michigan and Georgia as he has sought to overturn his election loss. Even as most states have certified their results, Trump has refused to accept the outcome -- instead pushing baseless conspiracies that his second term is being stolen and launching a legal effort to overturn results.

"We will still win it," the President said in Georgia Saturday evening, even though there are no means for him to do so.

Earlier that day, Trump had called Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, pushing him to convince state legislators to overturn Biden's win in the state, a source familiar with the conversation told CNN.

Trump specifically asked Kemp to call a special session and convince state legislators to select their own electors who would support him, according to the source. He also asked the Republican governor to order an audit of absentee ballot signatures.

Kemp explained that he did not have the authority to order such an audit and denied the request to call a special session, the source said.

Still, Straub stressed Monday that the President's Pennsylvania call centered on changes to the state's election law, which "went through massive changes last year."

Related Article: Trump pressured Georgia governor in call to help overturn Biden's win in state

"Cutler was very involved in writing, negotiating and passing a law that was ultimately signed into law by our Democratic Governor. That law was then very much changed by our state Supreme Court ... in ways that have landed that law in court by several different parties, including Trump," he said. "That was the subject of the discussions, no requests to do anything were made."

CNN's Caroline Kelly contributed to this report.

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Some Trump administration officials resign while others stay to prevent chaos

cnn.com/2021/01/07/politics/resignations-trump-white-house/index.html

January 7, 2021



*(CNN)*President Donald Trump's top national security officials received calls in the hours following a mob attack on the US Capitol urging them not to resign, according to people familiar with the matter, an effort meant to safeguard American security as aides describe Trump devolving into volatile instability.

The fear of resignations came as senior officials began quitting in the hours after the assault, disgusted by Trump's inciting the rioters and refusal afterward to condemn them. Talk of invoking the 25th Amendment that could remove Trump from office escalated. And Democrats called for another impeachment.

The list of aidesand senior administration officialssubmitting resignations was growing Thursday, though at least one official who had been considering quitting decided to hold off. Aides said Trump's dark-of-night statement promising an "orderly transition" was released in part to stave off a mass exodus of aides and to tamp down speculation about removing the President from office.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe and national security adviser Robert O'Brien all received multiple phone calls from concerned former senior national security officials and the leaders of major corporate national security firms

asking if they plan to stay on, according to a person familiar with the conversations who had spoken with all three of them.

Pompeo, Ratcliffe and O'Brien all got a similar message: it was important they stay on for the continuity of government in the national security realm.

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These former officials and corporate figures conveyed they did not want a political crisis turned into a national security one, the person told CNN, and were concerned foreign adversaries may try to capitalize on it.

Trump's deputy national security adviser resigns as other top officials consider quitting over Capitol riot

The calls come as several senior figures were weighing resignations or have already stepped down, including Trump's deputy national security adviser, Matt Pottinger, who resigned Wednesday.

As of Thursday, it appeared Pompeo, Ratcliffe and O'Brien will not leave their roles. CNN reported Wednesday that O'Brien was considering quitting. Like many others in the administration, they were dismayed by the scenes that unfolded on Capitol Hill, this person said.

One senior aide described fellow officials serving in national security posts as remaining in their positions out of concern for the country's safety.

"I'm disgusted and shaken," the senior administration official said of Wednesday's events. But the official said at this point, they've decided not to resign out of concern for the "radical, unqualified loyalists" the President and his personnel chief Johnny McEntee have installed recently and could continue to install in the final two weeks.

"At this point, I can't let that happen where I sit," the official said.

Others, however, decided to leave.

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao announced in a statement Thursday that she will resign effective Monday, saying she was "deeply troubled" by the "entirely avoidable" events at the Capitol building.

Chao decided to resign after taking "time to absorb" the insurrection on Capitol Hill and the President's response to it, according to a senior administration official. The official said she weighed whether to exit the administration with staff and her husband, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, before making the decision.

Former White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, who still had an administration job as special envoy to Northern Ireland, told CNBC in an interview Thursday morning that he called Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday night to resign.

"I can't do it. I can't stay," Mulvaney said in the interview.

On Wednesday in addition to Pottinger, the first lady's chief of staff Stephanie Grisham, a press aide and the White House social secretary all resigned.

On Thursday morning, a senior administration official confirmed that John Costello, the Commerce Department's deputy assistant secretary for intelligence and security, resigned from his post. Ryan Tully, senior director for European and Russian Affairs, also resigned from the National Security Council, a White House official confirmed. And Tyler Goodspeed,

the acting chairman of the Counsel of Economic Advisers at the White House, submitted his resignation Wednesday, according to a person familiar with the matter.

"Those who choose to stay, and I have talked with some of them, are choosing to stay because they're worried the President might put someone worse in," Mulvaney said.

Trump encouraged the rioters in a speech immediately preceding the breach at the Capitol and has only reluctantly attempted to tamp down emotions.

He was initially reluctant to issue his statement vowing an "orderly transition" early Thursday morning after Congress affirmed the Electoral College win for President-elect Joe Biden. But Trump ultimately went through with it after pressure from multiple advisers, including White House counsel Pat Cipollone, according to two people familiar with the matter.

Some of the President's advisers encouraged him to go further than he did in the statement and pledge to stop fighting the election results. Some aides also wanted Trump to commit to prosecuting the protesters who breached the Capitol, as Vice President Mike Pence did in his own statements earlier in the day.

Ultimately, Trump agreed to a minimal statement vowing the orderly transfer of power but still vowing to fight.

"I have always said we would continue our fight to ensure that only legal votes were counted," he wrote via his social media adviser Dan Scavino.

The deliberations over the late-night statement occurred in the White House residence, where Trump bunkered down in what advisers described as an unstable emotional state. Among the advisers he consulted throughout the course of day were Scavino, chief of staff Mark Meadows and his daughter Ivanka, who helped convince him to tape a video amid the mob protest.

CNN's Pamela Brown, Jeremy Diamond and Maegan Vazquez contributed to this report.

Some Trump administration officials resign while others stay to prevent chaos

cnn.com/2021/01/07/politics/resignations-trump-white-house/index.html

January 7, 2021



*(CNN)*President Donald Trump's top national security officials received calls in the hours following a mob attack on the US Capitol urging them not to resign, according to people familiar with the matter, an effort meant to safeguard American security as aides describe Trump devolving into volatile instability.

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"I can't do it. I can't stay," Mulvaney said in the interview.

On Wednesday in addition to Pottinger, the first lady's chief of staff Stephanie Grisham, a press aide and the White House social secretary all resigned.

On Thursday morning, a senior administration official confirmed that John Costello, the Commerce Department's deputy assistant secretary for intelligence and security, resigned from his post. Ryan Tully, senior director for European and Russian Affairs, also resigned from the National Security Council, a White House official confirmed. And Tyler Goodspeed,

the acting chairman of the Counsel of Economic Advisers at the White House, submitted his resignation Wednesday, according to a person familiar with the matter.

"Those who choose to stay, and I have talked with some of them, are choosing to stay because they're worried the President might put someone worse in," Mulvaney said.

Trump encouraged the rioters in a speech immediately preceding the breach at the Capitol and has only reluctantly attempted to tamp down emotions.

He was initially reluctant to issue his statement vowing an "orderly transition" early Thursday morning after Congress affirmed the Electoral College win for President-elect Joe Biden. But Trump ultimately went through with it after pressure from multiple advisers, including White House counsel Pat Cipollone, according to two people familiar with the matter.

Some of the President's advisers encouraged him to go further than he did in the statement and pledge to stop fighting the election results. Some aides also wanted Trump to commit to prosecuting the protesters who breached the Capitol, as Vice President Mike Pence did in his own statements earlier in the day.

Ultimately, Trump agreed to a minimal statement vowing the orderly transfer of power but still vowing to fight.

"I have always said we would continue our fight to ensure that only legal votes were counted," he wrote via his social media adviser Dan Scavino.

The deliberations over the late-night statement occurred in the White House residence, where Trump bunkered down in what advisers described as an unstable emotional state. Among the advisers he consulted throughout the course of day were Scavino, chief of staff Mark Meadows and his daughter Ivanka, who helped convince him to tape a video amid the mob protest.

CNN's Pamela Brown, Jeremy Diamond and Maegan Vazquez contributed to this report.

China 'is laughing at us' after pro-Trump Capitol riot, says former U.S. ambassador

cnbc.com/2021/01/07/china-is-laughing-at-us-after-pro-trump-capitol-riots-gary-locke.html

January 7, 2021



Key Points

- "We have all these other countries around the world ... expressing concern about what has happened in America," former U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke told CNBC.
- Locke said China is "laughing" at America after the Capitol Hill riots.
- Political scientist Larry Sabato added that the damage to the U.S. reputation is a "tragedy."

VIDEO4:2804:28

China is laughing at us because of yesterday: Fmr. ambassador

The Exchange
Gary Locke, former U.S. ambassador to China, told CNBC on Thursday that the "deplorable" Capitol Hill riot has likely damaged American standing around the globe.

"China is laughing at us and saying we're not the model of democracy and of civility and of stability that we have always been lecturing the rest of the world to embrace," Locke said on "The Exchange." He was ambassador to China from 2011 to 2014 under former President Barack Obama and, before that, led the Department of Commerce. He was the first Chinese American to hold that Cabinet post.

"For so long, we have always been preaching to other countries to uphold the rule of law, to allow governments to transfer power after an election, to make sure the military doesn't step in and overthrow governments because they didn't like the election," said Locke, who also is a former Democratic governor of Washington.

"Now, we have all these other countries around the world ... expressing concern about what has happened in America, urging Americans to observe the rule of law and to respect the peaceful transfer of power and abide by the elections," said Locke. "They're now preaching to us."

Locke's comments came one day after supporters of President Donald Trump violently overtook the U.S. Capitol building, causing an hourslong delay to the finalization of Electoral College results that showed Trump lost to President-elect Joe Biden in November's election.

Trump has refused to concede the race to Biden, falsely claiming his Democratic opponent's victory was only possible because of widespread voter fraud. He pushed the baseless narrative Wednesday at a rally in Washington, during which he also encouraged his supporters to go to the Capitol to protest Congress' confirmation of the Electoral College votes.

After the pro-Trump mob occupied the Capitol, the president posted a video on Twitter telling them to "go home now" — while again making false claims about the election results. There have been four deaths linked to the unrest, including one woman who, authorities say, was shot and killed by police. More than 50 police officers also were injured.

The top two Democrats in Congress, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California, have called for Trump's immediate removal from office. If Vice President Mike Pence and Trump's Cabinet do not invoke the 25th Amendment, Schumer and Pelosi said Congress could move to impeach him.

U.S. allies have expressed disappointment over the Capitol chaos, with U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday calling it "disgraceful." French President Emmanuel Macron said in a recorded statement that the riots in Washington were "not America, definitely." He added, "We believe in the strength of American democracy."

Political scientist Larry Sabato told CNBC he believes the global image of the U.S. has been impaired by the Capitol Hill riots. "I would like to think that we'll be able to repair the damage, but it isn't going to be easy," he said on "Power Lunch," contending Trump bears responsibility for the harm.

"I don't think you're going to see the United States preaching about our great democratic ... system very much, at least for the next few years," added Sabato, director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia. "The sheen is off the shining city on the hill, to use the phrase that [former President] Ronald Reagan liked to use. It's a tragedy."

VIDEO2:3502:35

It's sad to see what the U.S. reputation has become: UVA's Sabato

Power Lunch

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Police departments across the U.S. open probes into whether their own members took part in the Capitol riot

By **Kim Bellware**

Jan. 9, 2021 at 10:00 p.m. EST

Police officers and at least one police chief from departments across the United States are facing termination, suspension or other discipline for their proximity to or alleged involvement in a chaotic gathering in Washington on Wednesday that ended in a riot at the U.S. Capitol and left five people dead.

Departments in California, Washington state, and Texas are among those that have announced investigations into their officers based on tips, social media posts and other evidence, though more officers could be identified as evidence emerges in the coming days.

The probes come after an especially fraught year for U.S. policing that saw massive civil rights protests against police violence. They are likely to raise questions about free speech, the expansion of surveillance and public trust in law enforcement, while legal experts warn the scrutiny could have unintended consequences.

In Seattle, Interim Police Chief Adrian Diaz confirmed at least two officers had been placed on administrative leave and referred to internal investigations after the department received social media posts showing the officers in Washington Wednesday.

"The Department fully supports all lawful expressions of First Amendment freedom of speech, but the violent mob and events that unfolded at the U.S. Capitol were unlawful and resulted in the death of another police officer," Diaz said in a statement Thursday. He vowed to fire any officers who were "directly involved in the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol."

The two officers were not immediately identified.

Thomas Goldie, a Pittsburgh area officer with the Zelienople Borough Police Department, is under investigation by the borough's legal department after he was photographed at Wednesday's rally wearing a hat that read "Trump MAGA 2020 f--- your feelings," CBS Pittsburgh reported.

Zelienople Police Chief Jim Miller told local media that Goldie was not believed to have taken part in the riot inside the Capitol building, but that the matter was under investigation.

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the violence against Capitol police. He later told New Hampshire Public Radio he accepted the outcome of the November election but attended out of support for President Trump, whom he has backed since 2016.

Richard Thackston, head of Troy's Board of Selectmen, has thus far rebuffed calls for Ellis' ouster. Neither man could be immediately reached for comment Saturday night.

In Texas, the Bexar County Sheriff's Office in San Antonio was among the first to announce an internal investigation into one of its employees' participation.

Roxanne Mathai, a Bexar County sheriff's lieutenant, is facing an investigation after she posted a video on Facebook of herself at the Capitol draped in a Trump flag; she noted she was not going to enter the Capitol building like others.

Bexar County Sheriff Javier Salazar said during a virtual news conference Thursday that his staff had forwarded the images of Mathai to the FBI.

Mathai referred questions to her attorney, Hector Cortes, who said he was confident the 46-year-old jail lieutenant would be cleared of wrongdoing because she was present at the rally but didn't participate in any illegal activity.

"All her posts show that the closest she got to the Capitol was that she was on the lawn at the time the chaos was happening inside, unbeknownst to her," Cortes told The Post.

Cortes said his bigger fear was the way his client was being unfairly swept up in the tide of anger that has washed over the country in the wake of the violent riot.

Cortes' concern is one echoed by legal experts like Cardozo law professor Kate Levine, who said the public appetite for officers to face harsh discipline for attending or taking a more hands-on role in the chaos could have unintended consequences that could ultimately harm vulnerable communities that are already over-policed.

"Public pressure does a lot of things, and it would be illogical to discipline people for attending a rally," said Levine, who writes about policing and the criminal legal system. Levine noted there is a "sharp line" between officers who attended a rally and those who illegally breached the capitol.

The wave of support to tap all available technology, including facial recognition and other tools that have complex privacy concerns, ultimately can work to legitimize and expand the surveillance state, she said.

"And it's a weight which inevitably falls on the shoulders of the least powerful and most marginalized people," Levine said. "Within police departments, this time it hits MAGA people, but next time it hits Black Lives Matter."

In California, the Oakland Police Department has taken the stance that even showing support for the riots on social media could land officers in trouble if it runs afoul of the department's hate speech guidelines. It has opened a probe into current officers who liked or otherwise expressed support for posts of the riot from a retired Oakland officer.

The department said in a statement Friday it "will not allow any members to engage in or support this type of content and will root out this conduct anywhere within the Department."

Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo, who also leads the Major Cities Chiefs Association, said the distinction between acceptable and fireable behavior should be clear in most cases.

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— even if it's not a criminal offense — could lead to termination, including expressing support for criminal or discriminatory acts, Acevedo said.

"If you're openly liking and supporting comments [conveying] support for people who had nooses, or were screaming about finding the vice president of the United States and harming him and who were caught with molotov cocktails — you'll likely receive severe sanctions," he said.

Updated January 13, 2021

Complete coverage: Pro-Trump mob storms Capitol building

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What happened on Jan. 6

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Analysis: What Trump said before his supporters stormed the Capitol, annotated

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Trump pressured Georgia governor in call to help overturn Biden's win in state




By Kristen Holmes and Veronica Stracqualursi, CNN
Updated 9:13 PM ET, Sat December 5, 2020

(CNN) — President Donald Trump on Saturday called Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, pushing him to convince state legislators to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's win in the state, a source familiar with the conversation told CNN.

Trump asked Kemp to call a special session and convince state legislators to select their own electors that would support him, according to the source. He also asked the Republican governor to order an audit of absentee ballot signatures.

Kemp explained that he did not have the authority to order such an audit and denied the request to call a special session, the source said.

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The White House declined to comment on the call, which was first reported by The Washington Post.

The President appeared to reference the call in a tweet Saturday that attacked Kemp and Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and called for a signature audit of the absentee ballot envelopes in the state, while making false or misleading claims about the potential process. The governor, in response, tweeted that he has already "publicly called for a signature audit three times" -- leading Trump to then double down on his request for Kemp to call for a special session of the state's Legislature.

Kemp spokesman Cody Hall confirmed the governor spoke with the President, but, when asked about the conversation, only said that Trump offered his condolences on the death of Harrison Deal, a young Loeffler campaign staffer.

TRUMP WHITE HOUSE

- White House exodus begins even as
- Courts across the country hand Trump and his allies more losses as attempts to upend election results collapse
- While Trump rants about votes, none of

CNN politics LIVE TV

Trump's call to Kemp, his latest attempt to interfere in the results of the 2020 election, came hours before the President's visit to the state to rally in support of Republican Sens. David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler ahead of January's Senate runoff elections. CNN previously

[illegible] state's election results -- demands they have rebutted.

Hall told CNN earlier this week -- following a separate push from Trump to intervene in the state's elections process -- that "Georgia law prohibits the Governor from interfering in elections."

his election security officials support him
- MAP: Full presidential election results

"The Secretary of State, who is an elected constitutional officer, has oversight over elections that cannot be overridden by executive order," Hall said in a statement at the time. "As the Governor has said repeatedly, he will continue to follow the law and encourage the Secretary of State to take reasonable steps -- including a sample audit of signatures -- to restore trust and address serious issues that have been raised."

Despite the pummeling from their party leader, Georgia GOP election officials have pushed back against Trump's claims of fraud in the state.

Biden won Georgia by more than 12,000 votes, becoming the first Democratic presidential nominee to win the Peach State in nearly three decades. Kemp certified the results of Biden's victory on November 20, following a statewide audit, which included a hand-count of the nearly 5 million ballots cast in the election.

Trump had recently bashed Kemp, who is a supporter of his, as a "moron" and a "nut job" during another phone call. And earlier this week, the President publicly criticized the governor in an interview on Fox News, saying he was "ashamed" he had endorsed Kemp.

The governor does not plan to attend Trump's rally in Valdosta, Georgia, Saturday night, due to the sudden death of a close friend of the family, Hall told CNN.

Related Article: All eyes are on Georgia ahead of Trump's rally and Senate debate

At the Georgia rally, the President spent the majority of the early portion of his remarks falsely claiming he won the election, taking shots at Kemp and saying the Senate runoffs will be rigged.

As CNN previously reported, Republicans had been concerned that Trump could depress voter turnout among his base in the state's crucial runoffs if he continued to rail against Georgia's election system and attack Kemp -- exactly what Trump's done at the rally.

The President also ran through a litany of issues that he envisions with a Democrat-controlled Senate, including packing the Supreme Court, ending the filibuster, abolishing second amendment rights, and making Washington, DC, and other places, states to secure more Democratic votes in Congress.

Trump said that winning the two Senate seats in Georgia is the "last line of defense to save America," a tacit acknowledgment that he lost the presidential election.

This story has been updated with additional developments Saturday.

CNN's Ryan Nobles and Jason Hoffman contributed to this report.

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POLITICO

LEGAL

FBI investigating whether woman stole laptop from Pelosi's office to sell it to Russia

The Pennsylvania woman was seen in footage near Pelosi's office Jan. 6.



A mirror is seen damaged in the private office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi after the Jan. 6 rioting in the Capitol. | 60 Minutes/CBSNews via AP

By **KYLE CHENEY**
01/17/2021 11:27 PM EST

The FBI is investigating evidence that a woman who entered the Capitol on Jan. 6 stole a laptop or hard drive from Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office and intended to sell it to Russians.

The bizarre claim, which the FBI emphasized remains under investigation, was included in an affidavit describing the criminal case against Riley June Williams, a Pennsylvania woman who was seen in footage of the Jan. 6 insurrection in area of the Capitol near Pelosi's office.

Advertisement

And it's not clear if the FBI has been able to apprehend her.

"It appears that WILLIAMS has fled," according to the affidavit, which was signed Sunday and posted publicly after 9 p.m.. "According to local law enforcement officers in Harrisburg, WILLIAMS' mother stated that WILLIAMS packed a bag and left her home and told her mother she would be gone for a couple of weeks. WILLIAMS did not provide her mother any information about her intended destination."

A Pelosi aide was not immediately available for comment. It was not clear if a laptop or hard drive was actually stolen.

According to the affidavit, a witness who spoke to authorities claimed to have seen a video of Williams "taking a laptop computer or hard drive from Speaker Pelosi's office.""[Witness 1] stated that WILLIAMS intended to send the computer device to a friend in Russia, who then planned to sell the device to

SVR, Russia's foreign intelligence service," the agent noted. "According to [Witness 1], the transfer of the computer device to Russia fell through for unknown reasons and WILLIAMS still has the computer device or destroyed it."

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"This matter remains under investigation," the agent concludes.

For now, Williams is facing charges of entering a restricted building and disorderly conduct for her actions inside the Capitol.

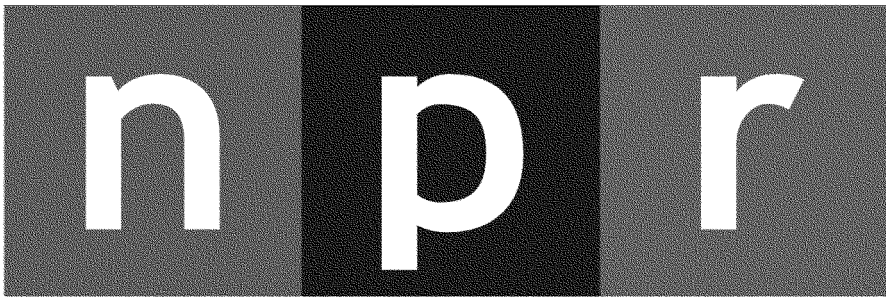
The agent handling Williams' case also spoke to law enforcement officials in Harrisburg who had recently interacted with Williams' parents. Williams' mother on Jan. 11 filed a suspicious persons report against the person the FBI has identified as "Witness 1." That witness is described as a former romantic partner of the suspect.

While local officers were present, Williams' mother called her via video, and officers saw her wearing a brown jacket that matched the one she was seen wearing in images from the Jan. 6 riots. Harrisburg officers also spoke with Williams' father, who said he drove with her to Washington for the protests but that they split up for the day while she joined other friends.

The pair drove home from Washington after meeting outside the Capitol

What We Know So Far: A Timeline Of Security Response At The Capitol On Jan. 6

npr.org/2021/01/15/956842958/what-we-know-so-far-a-timeline-of-security-at-the-capitol-on-january-6



What We Know So Far: A Timeline Of Security Response At The Capitol On Jan. 6

National Security

January 15, 20215:00 AM ET

Laurel Wamsley

Twitter





Enlarge this image
Convinced the election was stolen, thousands of Trump supporters storm the U.S. Capitol building on Jan. 6 as Congress counts and certifies the Electoral College vote. **Spencer Platt/Getty Images hide caption**

The Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol was a security failure, an intelligence failure — or both.

How could security forces in the nation's capital be so swiftly and completely overwhelmed by rioters who stated their plans openly on a range of social media sites? President Trump had even tweeted on Dec. 19: "Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!"

Washington, D.C., is known for its multitude of law enforcement agencies — a fact reflected in the agencies involved in security on Jan. 6. The Metropolitan Police Department has jurisdiction on city streets; the U.S. Park Police on the Ellipse, where Trump's rally took place; the U.S.Secret Service in the vicinity of the White House; and the U.S. Capitol Police on the Capitol complex.

And then there is the National Guard. In the 50 states and Puerto Rico, the Guard is under the command of the governor. In Washington, D.C., however,the Guard is under the command of the president, though orders to deploy are typically issued by the secretary of

the Army at the request of the mayor. Others weighed in on the use of the Guard on Jan. 6 — but exactly how that decision was made is the subject of debate.

Here is a timeline of events before, during and after the insurrection at the Capitol. We will update it as more details become known.

Fall 2020

The Department of Homeland Security produces a threat assessment — but it is an overview, a DHS spokesperson told NPR, focusing on the "heightened threat environment during the 2020-2021 election season, including the extent to which the political transition and political polarization are contributing to the mobilization of individuals to commit violence."

Late December



The New York Police Department sends a packet of material to the U.S. Capitol Police and the Washington Field Office of the FBI. This raw intelligence — bits and pieces of information scraped from various social media sites — indicates that there will likely be violence when lawmakers certify the presidential election results on Jan. 6.

But the DHS and the FBI do not create an intelligence report focused specifically on the upcoming pro-Trump rally. That's important because these reports go beyond raw intelligence — they validate informationand put it into context that would help local law enforcement develop a plan. These threat assessments or intelligence bulletins are typically written as a matter of course ahead of high-profile events. It's not clear why this didn't happen.

Monday, Jan. 4

The Metropolitan Police Department arrests Enrique Tarrio, leader of the far-rightProud Boys group. He is charged with destruction of property and possession of high-capacity firearm magazines. He'sreleased the next day and told to leave Washington.

The police had noted that D.C. law prohibits anyone from carrying a firearm within 1,000 feet of any First Amendment activity.

U.S. Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund asks permission from House and Senate security officials to request that the D.C. National Guard be placed on standby in case the protest gets out of control. *The Washington Post* reports: "House Sergeant at Arms Paul Irving said he wasn't comfortable with the 'optics' of formally declaring an emergency ahead of the demonstration, Sund said. Meanwhile, Senate Sergeant at Arms Michael Stenger suggested that Sund should informally seek out his Guard contacts, asking them to 'lean forward' and be on alert in case Capitol Police needed their help."

Tuesday, Jan. 5

The FBI Field Office in Norfolk, Va., issues an explicit warning that extremists have plans for violence the next day, as first reported by the Post. It releases its advisory report after FBI analysts find a roster of troubling information including specific threats against members of Congress, an exchange of maps of the tunnel system under the Capitol complex and organizational plans like setting up gathering places in Kentucky, Pennsylvania and South Carolina so extremists can meet to convoy to Washington.

FBI Norfolk officials share what they have discovered with counterparts in D.C., the *Post* reports. The head of the FBI's Washington Field Office, Steven D'Antuono, later says that information is shared with the FBI's "law enforcement partners" through the bureau's Joint Terrorism Task Force. That includes the U.S. Capitol Police, U.S. Park Police, D.C.'s Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and other agencies.

Officials convene a conference call with local law enforcement to discuss the Norfolk warning. The NYPD and Norfolk information contains raw intelligence that isn't yet validated or analyzed. Sources tell NPR the information was worrisome because of its specificity but was based on one or two sources — generally not enough to start deploying police or the National Guard.

Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser announces that the MPD will be the lead law enforcementagency and will coordinate with the Capitol Police, Park Police and Secret Service. "To be clear, the District of Columbia is not requesting other federal law enforcement personnel and discourages any additional deployment without immediate notification to, and consultation with, MPD if such plans are underway," Bowser tweets.

In a letter to the Justice Department, Bowser says "we are mindful" of events in 2020 — likely referencing the June 1 clearing of peaceful protesters in Lafayette Square by Park Police and other federal law enforcement that not answerable to the city. Police advanced through the crowd with little warning, firing tear gas and smoke canisters shortly before President Trump appeared outside for a photograph in front of St. John's Episcopal Church. NPR later reported that the military police asked the National Guard if it had a "heat ray" weapon the police could deploy. The National Guard said no.



Enlarge this image

In June, police officers clashed with peaceful protesters and fired tear gas near the White House during demonstrations over George Floyd's death. The heavy-handed approach by federal law enforcement agencies influenced the city's preparations for Jan. 6. **Jose Luis Magana/AFP via Getty Images hide caption**

toggle caption

Jose Luis Magana/AFP via Getty Images



In June, police officers clashed with peaceful protesters and fired tear gas near the White House during demonstrations over George Floyd's death. The heavy-handed approach by federal law enforcement agencies influenced the city's preparations for Jan. 6.

Jose Luis Magana/AFP via Getty Images

That day appears to have profoundly influenced the mayor's approach to the Jan. 6 events. In her letter, Bowser describes the difficulty and confusion of policing large crowds while working around other law enforcement personnel without proper coordination and identification.

Bowser requests, and receives, a limited force from the D.C. National Guard. The soldiers number 340, though they are unarmed and their job is to help with traffic flow — not law enforcement — which is to be handled by D.C. police.

Officials including Chief Sund of the Capitol Police brief U.S. Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., the chair of the House Administration Committee. "I was told by the police chief and the sergeant-at-arms that everything is under control and they had provided for every contingency," Lofgren later told *The New York Times*. "That turned out to be completely false."



Enlarge this image

Trump supporters gathered on Jan. 6 outside a security perimeter on the National Mall for a rally against the Electoral College certification of Joe Biden as the winner of the 2020 presidential election. **Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty Images hide caption**

toggle caption

Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty Images



Trump supporters gathered on Jan. 6 outside a security perimeter on the National Mall for a rally against the Electoral College certification of Joe Biden as the winner of the 2020 presidential election.

Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty Images

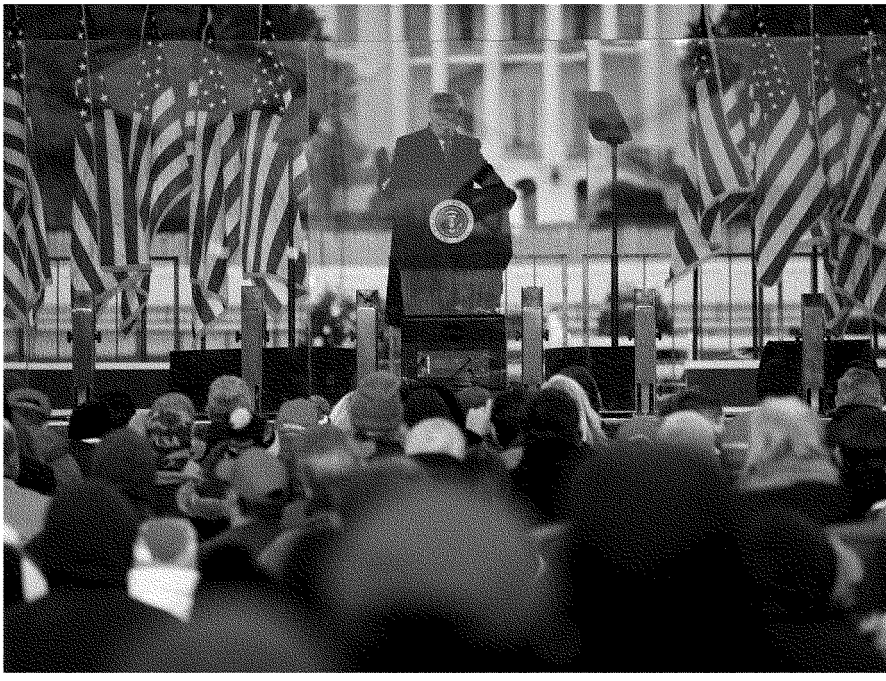


Enlarge this image

President Trump addresses his supporters at The Ellipse on Jan. 6, saying, "This election was stolen from you, from me, from the country." As he called for, crowds began marching toward the Capitol. **Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty Images hide caption**

toggle caption

Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty Images



President Trump addresses his supporters at The Ellipse on Jan. 6, saying, "This election was stolen from you, from me, from the country." As he called for, crowds began marching toward the Capitol.

Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty Images

Wednesday, Jan. 6

Just before noon Trump begins to address the crowd at the Ellipse, behind the White House. He falsely claims that "this election was stolen from you, from me, from the country."

Trump calls on his supporters at the rally to march on the U.S. Capitol, saying he will walk with them. Instead, he returns to the White House.

Around 1 p.m. "We see this huge crush of people coming down Pennsylvania Ave. toward the Capitol," reports NPR's Hannah Allam. "We follow the crowd as it goes up to the Hill, toward the Capitol. There's scaffolding set up for the inauguration already," she adds. "But as far as protection, all we really saw were some mesh barriers, some metal fencing and only a small contingent of Capitol Police. And we watched them being quickly overwhelmed."

The FBI says multiple law enforcement agencies receive reports of a suspected pipe bomb at the headquarters of the Republican National Committee. Fifteen minutes later, there are reports of a similar device at the Democratic National Committee headquarters. The agency offers a $50,000 reward for information.



Enlarge this image

Trump supporters clash with police and security forces as they push down barricades to storm the U.S. Capitol. The Capitol Police officers are quickly overwhelmed. **Roberto Schmidt/AFP via Getty Images hide caption**

toggle caption

Roberto Schmidt/AFP via Getty Images



Trump supporters clash with police and security forces as they push down barricades to storm the U.S. Capitol. The Capitol Police officers are quickly overwhelmed.

Roberto Schmidt/AFP via Getty Images

1:11 p.m. Trump finishes his remarks.

1:34 p.m. Mayor Bowser asks Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy for additional Guard forces, according to a Pentagon timeline.

1:49 p.m. Capitol Police Chief Sund speaks with the commanding general of the D.C. National Guard Maj. Gen. William Walker by phone and requests immediate assistance.

2-2:30 p.m. NPR reporter Tom Bowman and producer Graham Smith watch from the Capitol lawn as D.C. police in riot gear move in and out of the crowds.

Moving to the Senate terrace, they see protesters smashing the door of the Capitol to gain entry, as Capitol Police inside work to push them back.

2:10 p.m. Capitol Police send an alert that all buildings in the Capitol complex are on lockdown due to "an external security threat located on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol Building. ... [S]tay away from exterior windows and doors. If you are outside, seek cover."

The House and Senate abruptly go into recess.



Enlarge this image

Members of Congress run for cover as rioters try to enter the House chamber on Jan. 6. At one point, rioters get near the Senate chamber, but a Capitol Police officer lures them away.
Drew Angerer/Getty Images hide caption

toggle caption
Drew Angerer/Getty Images



Members of Congress run for cover as rioters try to enter the House chamber on Jan. 6. At one point, rioters get near the Senate chamber, but a Capitol Police officer lures them away.

Drew Angerer/Getty Images

2:14 p.m. Demonstrators arrive close to the Senate chamber, as seen on video captured by Huffington Post reporter Igor Bobic. Capitol Police Officer Eugene Goodman redirects them to another hall where there are additional officers.

2:22 p.m. On a conference call with Pentagon officials, D.C. Mayor Bowser requests National Guard support and Capitol Police Chief Sund pleads for backup.

"I am making an urgent, urgent immediate request for National Guard assistance," Sund told *The Washington Post* he said on the call. "I have got to get boots on the ground."

D.C. officials on the call told the *Post* they heard director of the Army Staff Lt. Gen. Walter Piatt say that he could not recommend that his boss, Army Secretary McCarthy, approve the request and that he did not like "the visual" of a line of National Guard soldiers in front of the Capitol.

Piatt disputes this. He says that McCarthy ran to the office of Acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller for approval as soon as he had a specific request for assistance from the Capitol Police. Piatt says he told the others on the call that he was not the approval authority and that they needed to make a plan for how to use the National Guard troops if approved.

2:24 p.m. Trump tweets criticism of Vice President Pence: "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!"

2:30 p.m. Acting Defense Secretary Miller, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley and Army Secretary McCarthy meet to discuss the requests from Capitol Police Chief Sund and Mayor Bowser.

2:31 p.m. Bowser orders a citywide curfew beginning at 6 p.m.



Enlarge this image

Law enforcement engages in a standoff at a door in the House chamber. Rioter Ashli Babbitt, an Air Force veteran from the San Diego area, is fatally shot by a Capitol Police officer. **Drew Angerer/Getty Images hide caption**

toggle caption
Drew Angerer/Getty Images



Law enforcement engages in a standoff at a door in the House chamber. Rioter Ashli Babbitt, an Air Force veteran from the San Diego area, is fatally shot by a Capitol Police officer.

Drew Angerer/Getty Images
2:44 p.m. From inside the House chamber come reports of an armed standoff at the door to the chamber. Police officers have their guns drawn on someone trying to get in.

A gunshot is heard. A Capitol police officer shoots rioter Ashli Babbitt, an Air Force veteran from the San Diego area, who later dies.

Three other protesters die in the riot from medical emergencies. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick later dies from injuries suffered when he was attacked by rioters. Four days later, Capitol Police Officer Howard Liebengood, who was at the Capitol during the riot,dies by suicide.

3 p.m. Acting Defense Secretary Miller determines that all available forces of the D.C. National Guard are required to reestablish security of the Capitol complex.

Guardsmen are moved from traffic points and Metro stations to the D.C. Armory and refitted for a crowd control mission. Army Secretary McCarthy directs the National Guard to prepare soldiers to move from the Armory to the Capitol complex.

3:04 p.m. Miller provides verbal approval for the full activation of the D.C. National Guard — 1,100 members. McCarthy directs the D.C. National Guard to initiate full mobilization.

3:29 p.m. Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam tweets that his team is working closely with Mayor Bowser, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer to respond to the situation. Northam says that at the mayor's request, he is sending Virginia National Guard members and 200 Virginia State Police troopers to Washington.



Enlarge this image

After a series of phone calls from local and Capitol Police leaders to Defense Department officials, the D.C. National Guard is deployed to help end the riot that saw Trump supporters breaking windows to get into the Capitol. **Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images hide caption**

toggle caption

Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images



After a series of phone calls from local and Capitol Police leaders to Defense Department officials, the D.C. National Guard is deployed to help end the riot that saw Trump supporters breaking windows to get into the Capitol.

Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images

3:26 p.m. McCarthy tells Bowser and D.C. Police Chief Robert Contee that their request was approved.

3:36 p.m. White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany says on Twitter that the National Guard is on its way at Trump's direction.

4:17 p.m. Trump tweets a video downplaying the events of the day, repeating false claims that the election was stolen and sympathizing with his followers, saying: "I know your pain, I know you're hurt. We had an election that was stolen from us. It was a landslide election and everyone knows it, especially the other side. But you have to go home now. We have to have peace. ... You're very special. You've seen what happens. You see the way others are treated that are so bad and so evil. I know how you feel, but go home, and go home in peace."

5:02 p.m. One hundred fifty-four members of the D.C. National Guard depart the D.C. Armory.

5:21 p.m. In a video statement, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan says, "I never thought I'd see a day like this in America. All Americans should be outraged by this attack on our nation's Capitol." Hogan gives orders to mobilize 200 Maryland State Police troopers and 500 National Guard troops.



Enlarge this image

Riot police push back a crowd of Trump supporters after they storm the Capitol. In the end, police from nearby jurisdictions and National Guard members from six states are called in.
Roberto Schmidt/AFP via Getty Images hide caption

toggle caption
Roberto Schmidt/AFP via Getty Images



Riot police push back a crowd of Trump supporters after they storm the Capitol. In the end, police from nearby jurisdictions and National Guard members from six states are called in.

Roberto Schmidt/AFP via Getty Images

5:40 p.m. NPR's Tom Bowman and Graham Smith see the D.C. National Guard arrive at the East Front of the Capitol with helmets and shields. The area is now lined with D.C. police, Prince George's County (Md.) Police and other law enforcement.

6 p.m. Acting Defense Secretary Miller authorizes the mobilization of up to 6,200 National Guard troops from Maryland, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania, according to the Pentagon.

A curfew begins in Washington.

6:01 p.m. Trump tweets a message to his supporters. "These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long. Go home with love & in peace. Remember this day forever!"

6:14 p.m. Capitol Police, MPD and the D.C. National Guard establish a perimeter on the west side of the Capitol.

By 7:15 p.m. "[B]oth chambers and leadership offices were cleared, and members were able to return to business, and we began the planning for the following day," Army Secretary McCarthy later says.

8 p.m.: The Capitol is declared secure. Members of Congress return to complete the opening and counting of the Electoral College votes.

Thursday, Jan. 7

3:45 a.m. Pence affirms that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have won the Electoral College: "Joseph R. Biden Jr. of the state of Delaware has received for president of the United States, 306 votes. Donald J. Trump of the state of Florida has received 232 votes."

Later that day: Sund resigns. So do Michael Stenger, the Senate sergeant-at-arms, and Paul Irving, sergeant-at-arms for the House of Representatives.

Acting U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Michael Sherwin and the FBI begin to announce a series of arrests and a variety of federal criminal charges against people involved in the Capitol attack.

Sunday, Jan. 10

The FBI formally warns local law enforcement that armed protests are being planned for all 50 statehouses and the U.S. Capitol. The warning says an unidentified group is calling on others to help it "storm" state, local and federal courthouses, should Trump be removed as president before Inauguration Day.

Monday, Jan. 11

Rep. Tim Ryan, D-Ohio, says two Capitol Police officers have been suspended. One of the suspended officers took a selfie with a rioter. The other put on a MAGA hat "and started directing people around," says Ryan. He chairs the House subcommittee investigating police response to the riot and says 10 to 15 other Capitol Police officers are under investigation.

Chad Wolf, acting secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, announces he is stepping down. DHS includes the Secret Service, which will be in charge of security for the inauguration.

Tuesday, Jan. 12

The U.S. Justice Department says it has received more than 100,000 pieces of digital information in response to its call for tips about those responsible for the Capitol riot. The Justice Department says MPD acted on its intelligence to arrest the Proud Boys' Tarrio before the protest, and federal officials interrupted travel of others who planned to go to D.C.

Sherwin says the numbers of arrests will "geometrically increase."

Acting DHS Secretary Peter Gaynor issues a memorandum expanding the designation of the 59th Presidential Inauguration as a national special security event from a period beginning Jan. 13 and lasting through Jan. 21.

Wednesday, Jan. 13

President Trump is impeached by the House of Representatives for inciting an insurrection.

The secretary of the Army announces that as many as 20,000 National Guard troops are expected to be deployed to D.C. for the inauguration. Some will be armed, while others will have access to their weapons but will not carry them.



Enlarge this image

Armed members of the National Guard deployed outside the U.S. Capitol on Thursday. A heavy military and police presence is expected in the city until the Biden inauguration.
Andrew Harnik/AP hide caption

toggle caption
Andrew Harnik/AP



Armed members of the National Guard deployed outside the U.S. Capitol on Thursday. A heavy military and police presence is expected in the city until the Biden inauguration.

Andrew Harnik/AP

Thursday, Jan. 14

FBI Director Christopher Wray says the bureau has identified more than 200 suspects from the Capitol riots and arrested more than 100 others in connection with the violence. "We know who you are if you're out there — and FBI agents are coming to find you," he warns.

Friday, Jan. 15

U.S. Department of Justice Inspector General Michael Horowitz announces his office will begin "a review to examine the role and activity of DOJ and its components in preparing for and responding to the events at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021." Horowitz said his review will coordinate with IG reviews in the departments of Defense, Homeland Security and Interior.

NPR's Dina Temple-Raston, Cheryl Corley, Greg Myre, Tom Bowman, Martin Kaste and Domenico Montanaro contributed to this report.

Correction Jan. 15, 2021

A previous version of this story incorrectly said the Park Police asked the National Guard about a "heat ray" at a June protest. It was military police that made the inquiry.

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Avowed Trump supporter arrested near Capitol for carrying gun; woman charged with impersonating police

By **Laura Meckler**

Jan. 17, 2021 at 3:41 p.m. EST

A 22-year-old Virginia man whose Facebook page features a photo from the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol was arrested near the Capitol complex Sunday, and police said he was carrying three high-capacity magazines, 37 rounds of unregistered ammunition and a Glock 22 firearm.

The arrest of Guy Berry of Gordonsville, Va., was reported by D.C. police and confirmed by his aunt, who said she was his primary caregiver when he was a child and who asked not to be named to protect her privacy.

The aunt said she saw Berry on Jan. 6 and knows he was not at the Capitol that day, when a mob of supporters of President Trump forced their way into the building to try to stop the certification of his election defeat.

But she said her nephew often voiced pro-Trump sentiments and "always carries his gun." Asked why, she said, "Just because he can."

"He's one of those open-carry people," the aunt said, adding that she and her nephew disagreed over both politics and his decision to carry a firearm.

"I keep telling him Black men can't walk around with guns on his hip, but he doesn't believe me," she said. She said she received a voice-mail message from him early Sunday saying he had been arrested but had not yet spoken with him.

Also this weekend, U.S. Capitol Police arrested a woman accused of impersonating a police officer, stopping her at a security checkpoint in place for Wednesday's inauguration.

The areas around the Capitol and the White House, as well as much of downtown Washington, are under a strict and massive lockdown following the Jan. 6 breach, which resulted in the deaths of a Capitol Police officer and four others.

Law enforcement agencies have warned of the possibility of additional violent protests on Sunday and through Wednesday's inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden, both in Washington and at state capitols.

But with a huge police and National Guard presence stationed around key government buildings and Washington's monumental core, no major protests or violence had materialized by 3 p.m.

A valid security credential is needed to enter the sprawling and unprecedented security zone, with many checkpoints in place.

Police said Berry was walking just after midnight Sunday on the 200 block of Massachusetts Avenue NE with a firearm "clearly visible" in a holster. He was stopped near a police checkpoint, and officers concluded he was not permitted to carry a handgun in the District. They then discovered he was also in possession of the magazines and ammunition and was placed under arrest, police said.

He was arrested on charges of carrying a pistol without a license and possession of a large-capacity ammunition feeding device and unregistered ammunition.

Berry is pictured on his Facebook page wearing a black cowboy hat, with his arms folded onto his chest, looking down at the camera. His cover photo is a wide shot of the U.S. Capitol during the riot, with two large "Trump 2020" signs on display and smoke rising.

A post on Election Day shows video of Berry, again in his cowboy hat, saying he "did my part" and voted, exulting that he "put a shovel of coal in the Trump train--choo, choo!" Above this video, he wrote, "I see smoke in the district... trump better win #TrumpTrain."

Berry's Facebook page bio reads, "A warriors mentality, with a poets soul."

In 2017, Berry was arrested in Charlottesville and accused of shooting a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school, a felony. The case was later dropped. Berry's aunt said that the case did not involve an altercation with anyone and that her nephew had shot into the ground. Nonetheless, she said, the arrest derailed his plans to enlist in the military.

Since then, Berry has worked off and on driving trucks, she said. She said he was supposed to start working Monday driving a truck for a gas company.

In a separate incident, the woman arrested Saturday was stopped by Capitol Police about 8:45 a.m. at a checkpoint at First Street and Columbus Circle NE.

She presented what was identified as a military challenge coin, a pocket-size medallion that is typically given out by military commanders, Capitol Police said.

The woman, whose name was not released, said she was a law enforcement officer. But as she was being questioned, she drove off. She was stopped shortly thereafter and placed under arrest, police said.

Capitol Police said she was charged with false impersonation of a law enforcement officer, failure to obey an officer and fleeing a law enforcement officer.

The woman was taken for evaluation at the D.C. Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program and later processed at Capitol Police headquarters and then transported to the D.C. Central Cell Block.

In a separate incident on Friday, a Virginia man who has been working as a private security guard in the area was arrested after law enforcement officers said they found at least one firearm and ammunition in his truck as he tried to enter an inauguration security checkpoint.

Wesley Allen Beeler, 31, of Front Royal drove his Ford F-150 up to a checkpoint on E Street, northeast of the Capitol, where he was met by Capitol Police officers, according to court documents.

In an interview, he said he forgot that his gun was in his truck when he left his home in Virginia, where he said he has a license to carry. A person with knowledge of Beeler's actions, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the case is pending, said Beeler has no extremist ties, cooperated fully with law enforcement and was cleared from further investigation, except for the charge of violating District law by carrying a pistol without a license.

Peter Hermann contributed to this report.

Updated January 17, 2021

Complete coverage: Pro-Trump mob storms Capitol building

Security

Live updates: State capitols, D.C. brace for potentially violent protests

Arrests: Here are some of the people charged

What happened on Jan. 6

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Exclusive: Capitol Police intelligence report warned three days before attack that 'Congress itself' could be

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Oregon state lawmakers delay gathering for 2021 legislative session, brace for armed protests

opb.org/article/2021/01/14/oregon-legislature-state-capitol-protests-violence/



Politics

By Lauren Dake (OPB), Jonathan Levinson (OPB) and Conrad Wilson (OPB)
Portland, Ore. Jan. 14, 2021 6:24 p.m. Updated: Jan. 15, 2021 12:32 a.m.

Lawmakers heed the advice from Oregon State Police and FBI in delaying gathering for the 2021 session.

▶ 0:00 / 5:04

Oregon state lawmakers are preparing for the possibility of another armed protest at the Capitol in Salem and will delay gathering in-person on the first day of the 2021 legislative session.

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Earlier this week, the FBI informed state legislators across the country to brace for large protests being planned in state capitals in the run-up to the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden.

Related: Oregon National Guard will protect state Capitol in run-up to Biden inauguration

Oregon state lawmakers said they were canceling the in-person gathering out of an abundance of caution and after heeding advice from the Oregon State Police.

"All the decisions are based pretty much initially on the State Police. They're the ones directing much of what we do," Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, told the Statesman Journal, which first reported the news. "There's concern that they don't quite know what the level or the intensity of demonstrations might be because of what's happened before to the Oregon Capitol."

During a one-day special session in December, far-right demonstrators gathered outside the state Capitol in demanding access to the closed building. The building was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Far-right demonstrators clash with police and counter-demonstrators during a demonstration against what they erroneously claim was a fraudulent presidential election on Jan. 6, 2021, in Salem, Ore. Lawmakers have delayed plans to gather in person next week for the start of the 2021 legislative session out of an abundance of caution.
Jonathan Levinson / OPB

Rep. Mike Nearman, a Republican lawmaker, intentionally opened the door to the state Capitol, allowing the demonstrators outside to gain access to the building. A chaotic scene unfolded, with state troopers and Salem police officers squaring off with the demonstrators, some of whom were spraying a chemical agent at officers.

Related: Rep. Mike Nearman stripped of responsibilities, faces fine for allowing Capitol breach

Gov. Kate Brown announced Wednesday she would be dispatching Oregon National Guard troops to the state Capitol in the coming days after a request was made by the Oregon State Police.

"The recent events at our Nation's Capitol building and at our own statehouse illustrate the need for law enforcement to be prepared and appropriately staffed for any large gatherings," OSP Superintendent Terrie Davie said in the statement at the time.

Oregon National Guard troops will be deployed in Oregon based on need, according to Maj. Stephen Bomar, a spokesman for the National Guard. A specific number of troops has not yet been determined.

Oregon National Guard troops will also be deployed in Washington, D.C., to offer assistance for the inauguration and are currently helping administer vaccines at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem.

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The deployments come amidst multiple investigations into service members across the country for their participation in the Jan. 6 insurrection at the nation's Capitol.

The Oregon National Guard confirmed to OPB that the FBI is investigating one of its members for allegedly making online threats. That soldier's social media activity contained posts supporting the Proud Boys, encouraging members of white supremacist group Patriot Front, and a Jan. 5 Facebook post that read, "It's almost go time boys. The Civil War starts tomorrow."

Bomar, a spokesman for the Guard, said the soldier denied making the posts and said that his identity had been stolen. The investigation was turned over to the FBI. If they confirm the soldier is responsible, the military will take action.

Bomar confirmed the soldier will not be part of the force called up to assist with protest security.

FBI leaders told OPB they have concerns about the potential for violence this weekend and surrounding the inauguration of President-elect Biden.

"In terms of the potential for violence I would say it's elevated over what we'd normally see," said Renn Cannon, FBI Special Agent in Charge of the Portland field office. He's set to retire at the end of the week.

Rallies are planned in Salem on Sunday and in Portland next Wednesday.

"We are seeing here in Oregon as we have throughout the country, elevated threat streams on social media, reporting from the public, and other indications that tell us there are some people that may be interested in doing some violence at some of these assemblies," Cannon said. "So we're paying attention to that. We're trying to ascertain through threat assessments and investigation, what is a true threat, and what we need to pay attention to and what's not."

Every FBI field office, including Portland's, is part of the investigation into the Jan. 6 takeover of the U.S. Capitol to determine who broke in and committed crimes.

"Do I anticipate any imminent arrests? Probably not," said Kieran Ramsey, the incoming Special Agent in Charge of the Portland division. "But also to talk more about that gets into the heart of investigations."

He declined to discuss specifics about investigations.

"You can see from the national picture," Ramsey said, "if we can put you in that Capitol breaking a law, we're coming to investigate you and you're going to take a charge."

In Oregon, the 2021 legislative session still technically kicks off on Tuesday, but neither members of the House of Representatives nor the Senate will be meeting on the chamber floors as initially planned. Committee meetings are also canceled. Those have been held remotely due to the pandemic, but still require a staff presence in the building.

Some lawmakers, however, still plan to be in the building.

Democratic Rep. Paul Evans, of Monmouth, said it was probably the right call to close the building, but he isn't going to let the armed demonstrators stop him from being at the statehouse.

"My duty station is the state Capitol and I will be there Tuesday and Wednesday," Evans said. "I spend generally two to three days in the office at the Capitol in a normal week anyway. I'm not gonna let the yahoos keep me from my normal routine of serving the public."

Dirk VanderHart contributed to this report.

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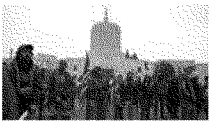

Oregon National Guard will protect state Capitol in run-up to Biden inauguration

The deployment comes as federal authorities warn of possible armed protests in every state.

Jan. 13, 2021



Oregon's long history of enabling extremists

The president faces an article of impeachment for inciting a riot in the U.S. Capitol, but the insurrection that unfolded last week was in step with extremist actions long tolerated and even encouraged by some Oregon Republicans.

Jan. 12, 2021

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POLITICS

Fact Check: Did Trump Call in the National Guard After Rioters Stormed the Capitol?

BY LAUREN GIELLA ON 1/6/21 AT 7:15 PM EST



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POLITICS FACT CHECK NATIONAL GUARD MIKE PENCE DONALD TRUMP

After the chaos of the raid on the Capitol on Wednesday, there is still much confusion over the response of federal law enforcement and the delayed authorization of the National Guard and police support.

While President Donald Trump initially encouraged his supporters to march to the Capitol, he later asked the mob to "remain peaceful," nonviolent and support law enforcement in a tweet that said, "I am asking for everyone at the U.S. Capitol to remain peaceful. No violence! Remember, WE are the Party of Law & Order – respect the Law and our great men and women in Blue. Thank you!

Minutes later, Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany tweeted that the president directed the National Guard to protect the Capitol.



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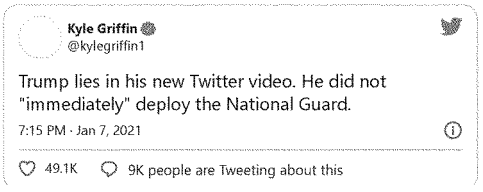
In a video posted on Twitter on Thursday, Trump repeated the claim, saying, "I immediately ordered the National Guard and federal law enforcement to secure the building and expel the intruders."



The Facts

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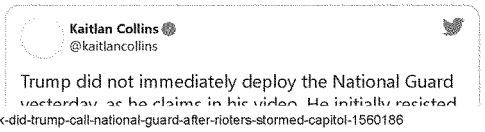
After the video was posted, it was widely reported that Trump was not directly involved with the deployment of the National Guard on Wednesday.

In a statement Wednesday, Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller did not mention working with Trump. He said he "spoke separately with the Vice President [Mike Pence] and with Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Senator Schumer and Representative Hoyer about the situation at the U.S. Capitol."

Reports show that Trump was initially hesitant to involve the National Guard. *NBC*said Trump "had to be convinced" and that Pence was in contact with the Pentagon and "encouraged a much more rapid deployment."

According to *CNN*, Trump was less eager to deploy federal forces on Capitol Hill on Wednesday than he had been for other protests, but "Pence played a key role in coordinating with the Pentagon about deploying them, and urged them to move faster than they were."





As the commander-in-chief, Trump is in charge of the country's armed forces and is the commanding general of the D.C. National Guard but not the Capitol Police, who, according to the Capitol Police website is overseen by the four members of the Capitol Police Board, with Congressional oversight.

While Trump was less involved in giving orders Wednesday, he gave Miller the green light earlier in the week.

"The acting secretary and the president have spoken multiple times this week about the request for National Guard personnel in D.C.," said Kash Patel, Miller's chief of staff. "During these conversations, the president conveyed to the acting secretary that he should take any necessary steps to support civilian law enforcement requests in securing the Capitol and federal buildings."

The deployment of the National Guard was anything but immediate.

The Department of Defense is the lead federal agency in these situations. Pentagon officials said that law enforcement was overwhelmed and responses were slow because they believed the amount of law enforcement personnel leading up to Wednesday's events was adequate.

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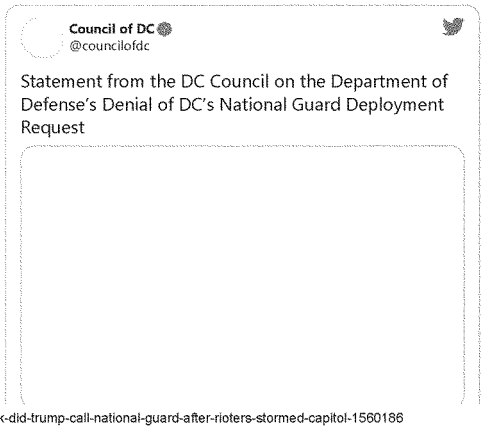
on Capitol Police and federal law enforcement to provide an assessment of the situation. And based on that assessment that they had, they believed they had sufficient personnel and did not make a request."

When D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser asked for the assistance of the D.C. National Guard (DCNG) earlier in the week, the troops were approved only for crowd and traffic control. The Pentagon prohibited troops from: receiving ammunition or riot gear; interacting with protesters unless necessary for self-defense; sharing equipment with local law enforcement; or using Guard surveillance and air assets without the defense secretary's explicit sign-off, according to *The Washington Post*.

According to the Department of Defense, once the protest turned more violent, Bowser requested more assistance and Secretary Miller "immediately called up 1,200 members of the D.C. National Guard."

However, multiple reports show that the Pentagon refused authorization of additional National Guard support after rioters broke into the Capitol.

The District of Columbia City Council said Bowser's request to expand the responsibility of the DCNG so they could help protect the Capitol was denied.



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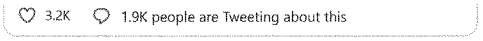

Bowser turned to surrounding state governments for support. While the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) allows Bowser to request aid from state national guards within D.C. city limits, out-of-state troops need federal approval to assist on federal property.

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan received a call from Representative Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) from an "undisclosed bunker" to send support but was stalled by the Pentagon.

"I was actually on the phone with Leader Hoyer who was pleading with us to send the guard," Hogan said in *The Washington Post*. "He was yelling across the room to Schumer and they were back and forth saying we do have the authorization and I'm saying, 'I'm telling you we do not have the authorization.'"

As he continued to mobilize his troops, Hogan waited 90 minutes before getting a call from Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy that federal authorization was granted for his National Guard to go to the Capitol. The DCNG is under the president's control, but the commanding authority is delegated to the Secretary of the Army.

"I can't tell you what was going on on the other end, on the decision-making process," Hogan said. "There's been lots of speculation in the media about that, but I'm not privy to what was going on inside the White House or inside the Pentagon."

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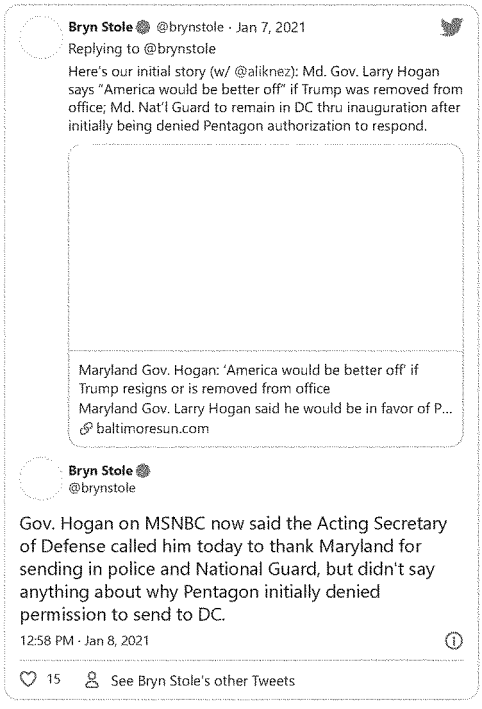
Guard but didn't say anything about why the Pentagon initially denied permission to send support to D.C.



According to *The Washington Post*, defense officials did not formally deny requests from Bowser to expand DCNG responsibilities but rather "reinforced the negative optics of having uniformed personnel inside the Capitol, a point on which Bowser had agreed, and later checked with the chain of command."

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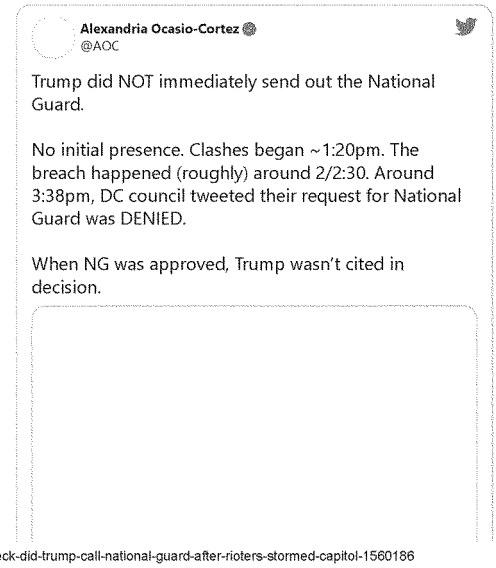
military officials had urged Bowser to request more support from federal law enforcement but that she didn't do so until Wednesday. Pentagon officials reviewed the request, activated the full DCNG and called governors to send their reinforcements. Officials also lifted previous limits on the guard, arming troops with riot gear, but not guns, before they headed to the Capitol.

Once all the authorization was granted, Pentagon spokesman Jonathon Hoffman did not mention Trump's involvement in his official public statement.

"The D.C. Guard has been mobilized to provide support to federal law enforcement in the District of Columbia," Hoffman said. "Acting Secretary Miller has been in contact with Congressional leadership, and Secretary McCarthy has been working with the D.C. government. The law enforcement response will be led by the Department of Justice."



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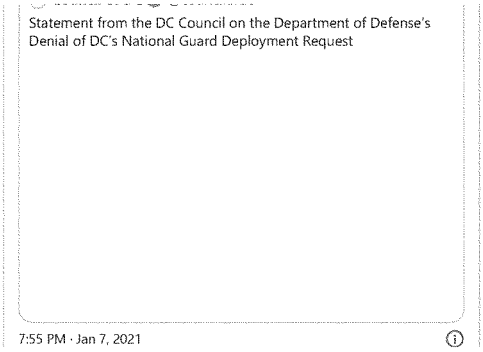

The Ruling

False.

Numerous reports and statements from defense officials show Trump was not involved in the deployment of the D.C. National Guard to quell the riot at the Capitol.

Acting Defense Secretary Miller used vague instructions that Trump have given days before the riot to "take any necessary steps to support civilian law enforcement requests in securing the Capitol and federal buildings."

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White House support.

The deployment of the National Guard was not "immediate." It took multiple requests for troops from D.C. and out-of-state law enforcement to gain authorization from federal defense officials to assist at the Capitol.

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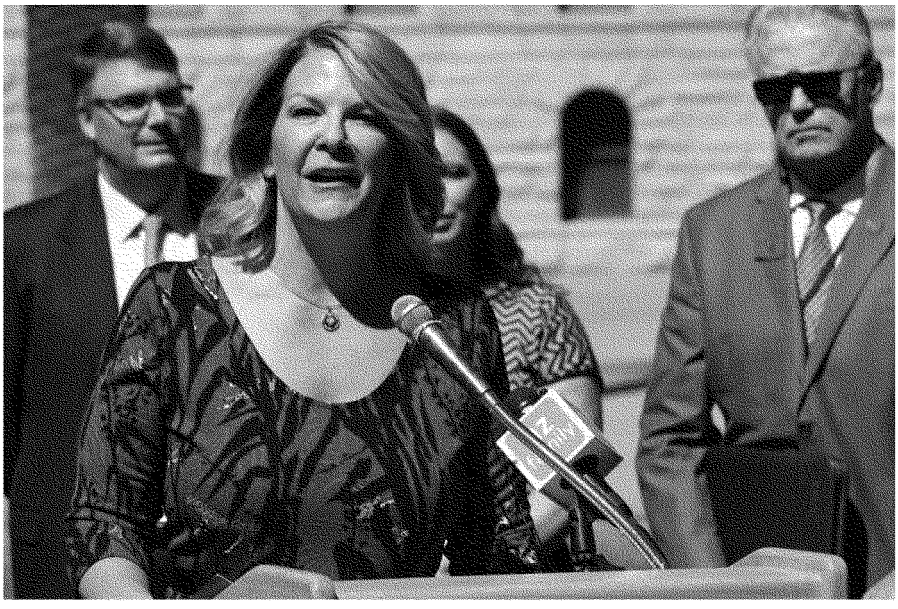
Judge: No fraud, misconduct, illegal votes in Maricopa County's 2020 election

azmirror.com/2020/12/04/judge-no-fraud-misconduct-illegal-votes-in-maricopa-countys-2020-election/

December 5, 2020



Arizona GOP chair Kelli Ward shown in a file photo. Photo by Jerod MacDonald-Evoy | Arizona Mirror.

A Maricopa County Superior Court judge denied Friday a Republican-backed request to nullify Arizona's election results and grant President Donald Trump, who lost in the official vote count, the state's 11 electoral college votes.

President-elect Joe Biden won the election in Arizona by about 10,500 votes.

Judge Randall Warner said there is neither evidence of fraud, misconduct, an erroneous vote count nor illegal votes in the 2020 election results in Maricopa County.

"The Plaintiff in an election contest has a high burden of proof and the actions of election officials are presumed to be free from fraud and misconduct," Warner wrote. "The Court finds no misconduct, no fraud, and no effect on the outcome of the election."

The lawsuit was filed Monday by state GOP chair Kelli Ward against the state's Biden electors. She alleged that Maricopa County election workers may have improperly verified signatures used to to confirm the identities of people who vote by early ballot and that they switched Trump votes to Biden votes on duplicates of ballots that were unreadable by the county's tabulation machines. Ward also claimed official observers couldn't get close enough to oversee the work of county staff during the signature verification process, but that claim was dismissed Thursday.

In Friday's findings, Warner explained that Ward had to prove any "misconduct rose to the level of fraud, or that the result would have been different had proper procedures been used."

Earlier in the week, the judge allowed for 100 ballots to be reviewed by lawyers and forensic document examiners, and Maricopa County voluntarily provided another 1,526 ballots for review. Only nine had an error, Warner wrote.

"The duplication process for the presidential election was 99.45% accurate," he said. "And there is no evidence that the inaccuracies were intentional or part of a fraudulent scheme. They were mistakes. And given both the small number of duplicate ballots and the low error rate, the evidence does not show any impact on the outcome."

Warner issued his findings after two days of evidentiary hearings.

On Twitter, Secretary of State Katie Hobbs, a Democrat, who is not named in the lawsuit but intervened in the case, said it is "time to stop" allegations that the 2020 election was inaccurate and fraudulent.

"Facts matter in a court of law, & the facts remain that this historic election had tremendous turnout and was both secure and accurate," she said.

The Arizona Republican Party replied to Hobbs' tweet, "See you at the Supreme Court." Hobbs promptly answered, "Can't wait."

> See you at the Supreme Court. https://t.co/DgcTP3vTfz
>
> — Arizona Republican Party (@AZGOP) December 5, 2020

Warner, the judge, said in his findings that an "immediate appeal to the Arizona Supreme Court" is permitted.

Jack Wilenchik, Ward's attorney, said the errors found in the processing of ballots are "serious" and need further investigation. His team has filed a notice of appeal, he said.

Jeremy Duda contributed to this report.

CONGRESS

Capitol reels from damage and destruction left by violent rioters

A day after a mob took control of the Capitol, staff members worked to return the building to a sense of normalcy.



— A worker cleans up debris outside the Capitol a day after supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol on Jan. 7, 2021. Erin Scott / Reuters

Jan. 7, 2021, 6:38 PM EST

By Lauren Egan

WASHINGTON – Broken glass crunched under the boots of National Guard officers as they roamed the near-deserted halls of Congress. The scent of tear gas lingered in the air. A coating of

fire-extinguisher residue lined the floors.

The events from less than 24 hours earlier when a pro-Trump mob took control of the Capitol at the encouragement of the president weighed heavily on the complex Thursday morning as staff members worked to clean up the remnants of an ugly day in American history.

"We've been doing this since 7 a.m.," said one Capitol worker, as he loaded damaged furniture onto carts in the early afternoon.

— Capitol workers remove damaged furniture on the first floor of the Senate side of the Capitol on Jan. 7, 2021, following the riot at the Capitol the day before. Bill Clark / CQ-Roll Call, Inc via Getty Images

— The remnants of pepper spray, tear gas, and fire extinguishers dusts the area around the northern entrance to the Capitol building on Jan. 7, 2021. Samuel Corum / Getty Images

Hundreds of lawmakers flooded the halls of the Capitol the morning before in order to count the electoral votes, but very few remained Thursday. Hallways that were packed with rioters the day before were now vacant.

Some staffers trickled through to survey the damage and tend to their ransacked offices. Reporters and photographers moved through the building documenting the destruction. There was a heavy police presence throughout and additional barricades were erected around the Capitol, blocking off sections of the National Mall.

Capitol employees used leaf blowers to clear the trash and Trump paraphernalia, including signs that read "Save America" and "Stop the Steal" and littered the Capitol steps where rioters first breached the building.

Police officers and reporters filtered through the Speaker's Lobby, a long room located off the House floor where admission is strictly limited to the press and lawmakers, who sit next to oversized fireplaces to discuss the news of the day. The shattered glass of the door where a woman was shot and killed the day before remained.

Along the exterior of the building, plywood covered windows and doors, concealing holes that staff members speculated had been caused by bullets. Five weapons were recovered from the complex, Washington police said.

— The bust of U.S. President Zachary Taylor is covered with plastic after blood was smeared on it when a pro-Trump mob broke into the Capitol building on Jan. 7, 2021. Samuel Corum / Getty Images

— Workers clean damage near an overrun Capitol Police checkpoint a day after a pro-Trump mob broke into the Capitol Jan. 7, 2021. Brendan Smialowski / AFP - Getty Images

— A member of the Architect of the Capitol inspects a damaged entrance of the Capitol on Jan. 7, 2021. Alex Wong / Getty Images

A large group of pro-Trump rioters broke through barricades and breached the Capitol Wednesday afternoon as Congress held a joint session to ratify the results of the 2020 election, a ceremonial event that had been injected with vitriol as President Donald Trump pressured Republican lawmakers to overturn the results in his favor.

Vice President Mike Pence, who was presiding over the count, was whisked from the dais as the mob entered the building and shouts could be heard from the outside the chamber door.

The vice president, House and Senate members, staffers and reporters sheltered in the Capitol for hours as police worked to secure the building. During that time, the rioters roamed the Capitol, destroying and ransacking lawmakers' offices, posing for pictures on the dais, smashing windows and stealing government property.

Dozens of police officers were injured and four people died, including the woman who was shot. The other deaths – two men in their 50s and one woman in her 30s – died from separate medical emergencies.

'Failure': Police treatment of Trump rioters sparks calls for new probe



Shortly before the building was breached, Trump told his supporters in a speech outside the White House that the election outcome was an "egregious assault on our democracy" and instructed them to "fight like hell" before encouraging them to "walk down to the Capitol."

The cleanup efforts that were well underway early Thursday morning raised questions as to why the Capitol was not being treated more like a crime scene when evidence is methodically catalogued and forensic data is collected to help identify perpetrators.

Some fingerprints could be seen caked into the residue from the tear gas and fire-extinguishers. Rioters also left behind used water bottles, energy drinks and discarded cigarette butts.

The FBI tweeted Thursday afternoon that it was "seeking to identify individuals instigating violence" and was "accepting tips and digital media depicting rioting or violence in and around the U.S. Capitol."

—— Chemical irritant canisters at a security checkpoint desk covered in dust at the Capitol building on Jan. 7, 2021. Graeme Sloan / Bloomberg via Getty Images

— A window is seen shattered next to the Senate Carriage Entrance on the eastern side of the Capitol building on Jan. 7, 2021. Samuel Corum / Getty Images

Despite the chaos and violence that engulfed the Capitol the day before, those who work in the complex arrived Thursday with a determination to restore the building to normalcy.

Some lawmakers – House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. – even held news conferences at the Capitol to address Wednesday's event.

Capitol officers stopped familiar faces in the hall to ask how they were doing. A cafeteria worker promised an officer he would still have his usual Thursday lunch ready for him.

"But don't worry," the cook said, "we won't serve the terrorists."



Lauren Egan

Lauren Egan is a reporter for NBC News based in Washington.

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NEWS MSNBC TODAY

Capitol assault 'damaged' US standing in the world, say lawmakers

thehill.com/homenews/administration/533083-capitol-assault-damaged-us-standing-in-the-world-say-lawmakers

Laura Kelly January 7, 2021



© Getty Images

The assault on the Capitol Wednesday by a rioting pro-Trump mob has "scarred" the U.S. reputation and "damaged our standing in the world," top House lawmakers with oversight of foreign affairs said.





House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Gregory MeeksGregory Weldon MeeksBiden urged to reverse Pompeo-Trump move on Houthis House Democrats introduce measures to oppose Trump's bomb sale to Saudis Trust between lawmakers reaches all-time low after Capitol riots MORE (D-N.Y.) and ranking member Michael McCaulMichael Thomas McCaulUS ambassador to Israel Twitter account briefly includes West Bank, Gaza Biden urged to reverse Pompeo-Trump move on Houthis Kremlin critic Navalny detained in Moscow upon return to Russia MORE (R-Texas) issued a joint statement Wednesday evening warning that the unprecedented violence at the Capitol emboldened by President TrumpDonald TrumpClinton, Bush, Obama reflect on peaceful transition of

power on Biden's Inauguration Day Arizona Republican's brothers say he is 'at least partially to blame' for Capitol violence Biden reverses Trump's freeze on .4 billion in funds MORE was a threat to democracies worldwide.



"America has always been a beacon of freedom to the world; proof that free and fair elections are achievable, and that democracy works. But what happened at the Capitol today has scarred our reputation and has damaged our standing in the world," the lawmakers said.

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"Today's violence — an inevitable result when leaders in positions of power misled the public — will certainly empower dictators and damage struggling democracies," they continued, without explicitly calling out the president.

The lawmakers continued that the people perpetrating the "violent insurrection of the Capitol" should be arrested and prosecuted.

"We must send a message to the world that this is not acceptable, and that America continues to stand for the rule of law," they said.

"It is time to make the peaceful transition of power. The world is watching."



Sen. Bob MenendezRobert (Bob) MenendezSenate presses Biden's pick for secretary of State on Iran, China, Russia and Yemen Year-end deal creates American Latino, women's history museums Lawmakers call for including creation of Latino, women's history museums in year-end spending deal MORE (D-N.J.), the incoming chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, issued a lengthy statement Wednesday evening condemning Trump for instigating the violence on the Capitol and said the scenes of violence that played out are a boon to "autocrats" and America's adversaries.

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"Today, I shed a tear for our country, which for centuries has inspired the world through its commitment to democracy and the rule of law. From Moscow to Beijing and beyond, autocrats are likely smiling as they witness America in disarray, at war with itself, and no longer a credible messenger for the democratic values that have always defined our great Republic," he said in a statement.

The statements from the top lawmakers came hours after the Capitol building was secured from a violent breach by pro-Trump supporters who — brandishing anti-Semitic symbols and Confederate flags — ran roughshod through the halls of Congress, destroying property and ransacking the chambers of lawmakers, including House Speaker Nancy PelosiNancy PelosiGOP operative installed as NSA top lawyer placed on administrative leave: reports

Budowsky: Democracy won, Trump lost, President Biden inaugurated
Biden taps career civil servants to acting posts at State, USAID, UN MORE
(D-Calif.).





A woman was shot and killed during the insurrection, which interrupted Congress's certification of the Electoral College vote affirming President-elect Joe BidenJoe BidenKaty Perry and her 'Firework' close out inauguration TV special Arizona Republican's brothers say he is 'at least partially to blame' for Capitol violence Tom Hanks: After years of 'troubling rancor,' Inauguration Day 'is about witnessing the permanence of our American ideal' MORE's win. At least 52 arrests were made, the Metropolitan Police Department said.

World leaders issued statements of shock and sadness at the drama unfolding in Washington, D.C., and called for democracy to be upheld.

Trump encouraged his supporters at a rally earlier Wednesday to walk to the Capitol and "show strength, and you have to be strong."

The rally followed weeks of the president stoking tensions undermining the lawful results of the U.S. election, claiming without evidence that it was "stolen."

The Electoral College certification carried out by lawmakers was delayed for most of Wednesday before resuming that evening, with Biden certified as president-elect early Thursday morning.

Trump issued a statement early Thursday morning through the Twitter account of his press secretary Dan Scavino saying that there would be an "orderly transition" for Biden's inauguration on Jan. 20.

Tags Michael McCaul Gregory Meeks Nancy Pelosi Donald Trump Bob Menendez Joe Biden Capitol riot Electoral College 2020 election

THE HILL

Foreign adversaries skewer US Capitol riots

BY LAURA KELLY AND REBECCA BEITSCH - 01/07/21 06:14 PM EST

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New Israeli envoy arrives in Washington, turning page on Trump era
INTERNATIONAL — 3H 51M AGO

Democrats urge tech giants to change algorithms that facilitate spread of extremist content
TECHNOLOGY — 4H 24M AGO



© Greg Nash

Global audiences watched in shock this week as pro-Trump rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol and violently attempted to prevent a transition of power from one presidential administration to the next.

The images broadcast around the world capped four years of chaos, confusion and strife under President Trump that has radically eroded global confidence in America's leadership on the world stage.

Foreign adversaries are now using the scenes of destruction in the nation's capital to bolster attacks on what they say is hypocritical U.S. moral authority in condemning other countries for violating and suppressing democratic freedoms.

"We know the world was watching yesterday and that it damaged our standing in the world," Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas), the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, told The Hill.

"It just doesn't give us the moral high ground when we have this democracy and yet our symbol of democracy is attacked by this mob that quite frankly was organized by the president," he added.

The scenes of Trump supporters ransacking the Capitol were seized upon by officials in countries that are routinely condemned and sanctioned by the U.S. and international community for their violent crackdowns on democratic institutions and pro-democracy protesters.

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— 5H 13M AGO

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"What we saw in the United States last night showed the failure and frailty of Western democracy in the world," Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Thursday.

In Venezuela, where the Trump administration has called the government of Nicolás Maduro illegitimate, Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza tweeted that the insurrection in Washington "reflects the deep crisis the political and social system of the United States is currently going through."

"With this unfortunate episode, the United States suffers the same thing that it has generated in other countries with its policies of aggression," read a statement released in Spanish.

Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, who is often criticized by human rights groups for instituting a systemic and brutal crackdown on activists and political opponents, used the mob attack on the Capitol to call for an end to U.S. sanctions on his country.

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"Yesterday's events showed that the U.S. has no moral right to punish another nation under the guise of upholding democracy. These sanctions must end," he tweeted.

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Lew Lukens, a 30-year veteran of the State Department who served as deputy chief of mission to the U.S. embassy in London until 2018, said, "There's definitely a fallout to U.S. global standing."

"In countries like China, Russia and Iran, after we have been lecturing these countries on building their democracies, and holding free and fair elections for years, I think they're getting great glee at looking at this dysfunction in our country."

Feds arrest right-wing media figure who

Even U.S. allies that had largely stayed quiet on Trump's more populist and xenophobic rhetoric over the past four years were quick to condemn Wednesday's events and highlight the president's role in fomenting the violence.

"Unacceptable and undemocratic scenes in Washington D.C.," tweeted Priti Patel, the British secretary of State for the Home Department and a member of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's conservative party.

US Army private facing terrorism charges over

"There is no justification for this violence and Donald Trump must condemn it. The United States is a beacon of democracy, hope and liberty and there must now be an orderly transition of power."

Trump was widely condemned for stoking the violence with his refusal to concede the election to President-elect Joe Biden and repeated, unsubstantiated claims of widespread voter fraud, riling up his supporters to fight back against what he called a "rigged" contest.

Kayleigh McEnany leaves letters for incoming

Dani Dayan, former Israeli consul-general in New York, called it "embarrassing" to have an Israeli community named "Trump Heights," in an interview with Israel Army Radio on Thursday. The community was established in the wake of the Trump administration recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which Syria claims.

"I think everyone now recognizes being associated with" Trump, or some aspects of Trump's policies or rhetoric, "is no longer a good thing anywhere," said one European diplomat, who asked for anonymity to speak candidly.

This could work in Biden's favor, the diplomat said, as U.S. allies welcome a return to stability and leadership that is bolstered by Democratic control of both chambers of Congress to advance Biden's agenda.

But despite the shocking images of the violence at the Capitol and the criticisms from autocratic nations, America's image abroad remains strong, the diplomat added.

"It is more significant in some ways because it's America, but at no point does anyone who's lived through more serious rebellion start getting worried about the strength of the American state," the diplomat said.

Eliot Cohen, dean of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and a former counselor at the State Department, said that while the images were shocking and have caused serious damage to America's standing abroad, he's optimistic the U.S. will weather the criticism and emerge from the crisis.

"One theme of Nazi propaganda during World War II was American race relations and lynching, and Jim Crow, and that was something real that they could point to. And they did," he said.

"The question with the United States is ... how quickly do we recover."

Biden was quick to address the nation, condemning the violence and calling for order. He also expressed hope for unity and the healing of divisions.

"The world is watching — and like so many other Americans, I am shocked and saddened that our nation, so long a beacon of light, hope, and democracy has come to such a dark moment," he said. "Through war and strife, America has endured much. And we will endure here and prevail now."

His remarks drew praise from world leaders who are optimistic about his presidency.

"I commend the words of President-elect Joe Biden," tweeted European Union Foreign Minister Josep Borell. "The strength of US democracy will prevail over extremist individuals."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has frequently clashed with Trump and was reportedly on the receiving end of some of his more harsh insults, blamed the president for the violence at the Capitol but expressed support for the future of U.S. democracy.

"We all saw the unsettling pictures of the storming of the Congress building yesterday evening. These pictures made me angry and also sad. I am, however, sure that this democracy will prove to be much stronger than the attackers and rioters," she said.

While some Trump loyalists and senior administration officials have condemned the violence and are beginning to distance themselves from the defeated president, some Democrats argue the Republican Party is not doing enough to separate itself and take responsibility for Wednesday's violence, going so far as calling for invoking the 25th Amendment to remove Trump or impeach him.

"I've tasted tear gas, come under gunfire and seen people die in strife in other countries. I never thought I'd see an insurrection in our Capitol," tweeted Rep. Andy Levin (D-Mich.).

Judge denies request for Amazon to immediately restore Parler

California Senate Republicans replace Trump-loyalist leader

"In a hierarchy of blame, I hold my colleagues who called for the overthrow of democracy more responsible than those who broke in."

Cohen, of Johns Hopkins, said that while he expects the U.S. to emerge from this crisis, the threats are not yet over.

"Everything's going to be tense, at least until Biden gets inaugurated," he said. "What we haven't had is a madman as president, that's the part that I think unnerves people most."

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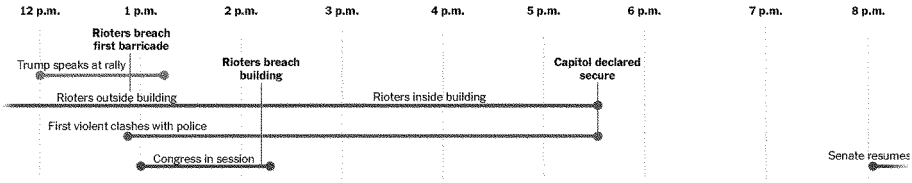
The New York Times https://nyti.ms/2XlRuto

Critical Moments in the Capitol Siege

By Lauren Leatherby and Anjali Singhvi Jan. 15, 2021



From the Trump rally to the violent breach of the Capitol and its aftermath, here is a moment-by-moment look at some of the pivotal events on Jan. 6, when thousands of protesters flooded the Capitol grounds and many rioters came within steps of members of Congress, who were gathered to certify the presidential election results.

Rioters **Trump** **Law enforcement** **Congress**

Before the Break-In

Before 2 P.M.

About 11:37 a.m.
Members of the Proud Boys, a far-right group, join protesters, who had been assembled on the Capitol lawn since 10 a.m.

12:03 p.m.
President Trump begins speaking at a rally near the White House, about a mile away from the Capitol.



12:17 p.m.
Mr. Trump tells rallygoers to walk down to the Capitol.
"After this, we're going to walk down, and I'll be there with you."

12:29 p.m.
A video shows a large crowd walking from the rally down Constitution Avenue to the Capitol.



12:53 p.m.
Rioters violently overwhelm the police and breach the Capitol's outermost barricade. They break through three more barriers,

forcing officers back to the Capitol steps, where they now face off.



1:12 p.m.
Trump ends his rally speech.

1:15 p.m.
By the Capitol steps, rioters continue to clash with the police. By now, reinforcements from local police have arrived to help. Both sides spray chemical agents.

1:58 p.m.
Rioters make it past two barriers on the east side of the Capitol and can now approach the doors of the building.

12:58 p.m.
Capitol Police in riot gear are seen arriving to reinforce the line of officers on the Capitol steps.

1:03 p.m.
Speaker Nancy Pelosi begins the joint session of Congress, where both chambers meet to certify the presidential vote.

1:12 p.m.
Several House Republicans, backed by Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, object to certifying Arizona's vote, sending the House and Senate to debate in separate chambers.



1:30 p.m.
The Senate and House debates begin in their respective chambers.

1:49 p.m.
Capitol Police requests National Guard assistance as rioters outside tear through scaffolding.

The Break-In

From 2 P.M. to 3 P.M.

2:10 p.m.
Another mob breaches the final barricade on the building's west side and approaches an entrance near the Senate chamber.

2:11 p.m.
The first rioters make it inside the Capitol building.



About 2:12 p.m.
As Senators continue to debate, Vice President Mike Pence is ushered off the Senate floor.

2:13 p.m.
Senator James Lankford, Republican of Oklahoma, is interrupted on the floor of the Senate, which is called into recess. A minute later, a mob arrives steps from a door to the Senate chamber.

About 2:15 p.m.
In the House Chamber on the south side of the building, Ms. Pelosi is ushered off the floor. The debate in the House continues.

2:18 p.m.
The House goes into recess, and representatives remain in the chamber.

2:24 p.m.
Mr. Trump criticizes Mr. Pence on Twitter.

"Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the

fraudulent or inaccurate votes which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!"

2:26 p.m.
Rioters breach a second entry into the building, this time on the east side.



2:26 p.m.
The House goes back into session, even with the mob in the building.

2:30 p.m.
The House is called into a final recess. Someone yells, "Sit down!"

About 2:30 p.m.
Senators are evacuated from the Senate chamber as House members remain in theirs.



2:35 p.m.
The first rioters reach a rear door of the House chamber, where members remain inside. Plainclothes officers train their guns on the door.



About 2:39 p.m.
Representatives begin evacuating the House chamber.



2:42 p.m.
Rioters reach the doors of the Speaker's Lobby.

2:44 p.m.
Ashli Babbitt is shot and killed by an officer as she attempts to break into the Speaker's Lobby. The last representatives are still being evacuated.

2:47 p.m.
Rioters make it to the floor of the Senate chamber, where they are seen sitting at the dais and hanging from the balcony.



Bringing the Capitol Under Control

From 3 P.M. to 8 P.M.

3:04 p.m.
The D.C. National Guard is activated, but its members would not arrive at the Capitol for more than two hours.

3:16 p.m.
Rioters now breech a third door at the building's southeast side.

About 4:14 p.m.
An F.B.I. SWAT team is seen at the building.

4:17 p.m.
Mr. Trump tweets a video in which he tells his supporters at the Capitol that he loves them.

"It was a landslide election. And everyone knows it. Especially the other side. But you have to go home. ... There's never been a time like this when such a thing happened when they could take it away from all of us. From me, from you, from our country. This was a fraudulent election. ... Go home. We love you. You're very special."

5:34 p.m.
The sergeant-at-arms, who is responsible for the security of Congress, tells lawmakers and reporters that the Capitol is now secure. Meanwhile, members of Congress continue to shelter in largely undisclosed locations.

5:40 p.m.
The D.C. National Guard arrives at the Capitol, swears in with the Capitol Police and begins support operations.

6:00 p.m.
Curfew begins in Washington, D.C. Officers arrest many who defy the order.

6:01 p.m.
In a tweet, Mr. Trump once again says that the election was stolen.

"These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long. Go home with love & in peace. Remember this day forever!"

6:14 p.m.
Capitol Police, local police and the National Guard establish a perimeter on the west side of the Capitol.



8:06 p.m.
The Senate resumes debate over the certification of Arizona's vote in the Senate chamber. The House would reconvene about an hour later.

With a citywide curfew in place and a heavy security presence outside the Capitol, lawmakers returned to their chambers and resumed debate late in the night, finally certifying the vote after 3 a.m. on Thursday.

Hours later, workers were seen installing a seven-foot fence surrounding the perimeter of the Capitol. By the weekend, said Ryan McCarthy, secretary of the Army, 6,200 members of the National Guard would deploy to the Washington, D.C., area in an effort to prevent similar breaches in the days leading up to Inauguration Day.

Sources: C-SPAN, videos and reports posted on social media, Department of Defense

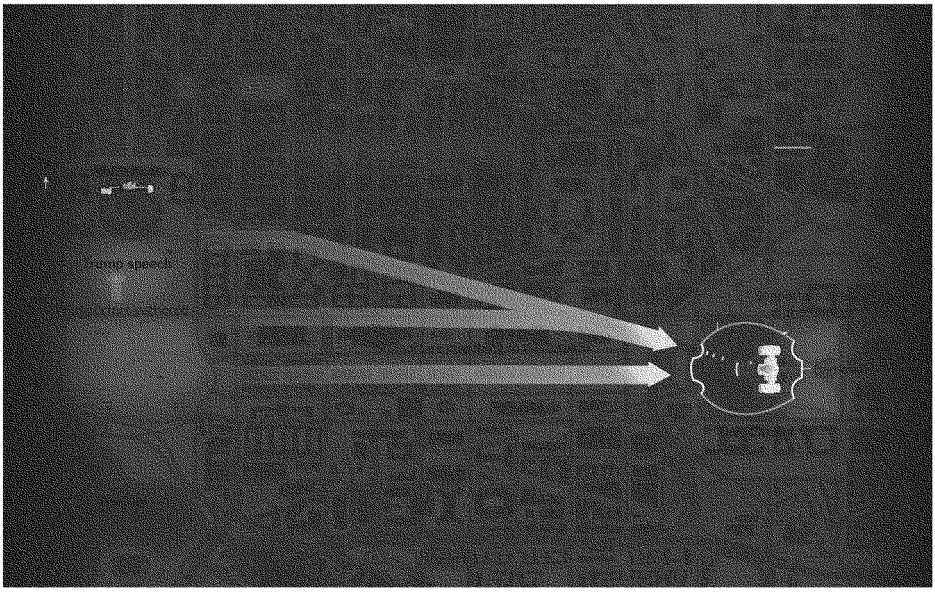
Additional reporting by the New York Times Visual Investigations team.

VISUAL INVESTIGATIONS

How a Presidential Rally Turned Into a Capitol Rampage

By Lauren Leatherby, Arielle Ray, Anjali Singhvi, Christiaan Triebert, Derek Watkins and Haley Willis Jan. 12, 2021

When President Trump railed against the election results from a stage near the White House on Wednesday, his loyalists were already gathering at the Capitol. Soon, they would storm it. We analyzed a crucial two-hour period to reconstruct how a rally gave way to a mob that nearly came face to face with Congress.



The day's events were captured by protesters and witnesses who live-streamed the action or posted the scenes on social media. The footage shows the simultaneous and alternating perspectives of Mr. Trump at the podium, the lawmakers inside the Capitol and the swelling numbers — and growing violence — of the rioters on the ground.

Before Noon

A Brewing Storm



President Trump prepares to go onstage.



Supporters gather at the Capitol.

For weeks, Mr. Trump had urged his supporters to go to Washington to stop the certification of the election results, and several simultaneous rallies were planned for Wednesday.

As the morning arrives, hundreds assemble on the Capitol lawn, more than a mile away from where Trump will soon speak near the White House. Among them are the Proud Boys, a far-right group, identifiable here by their orange hats.

11:50 a.m. East side of Capitol

Amanda Andrade-Rhoades/For The Washington Post via Getty Images

At the same time, near the White House, Donald Trump Jr. films the president and his inner circle backstage before his father's speech. In a video uploaded to his Facebook page, they are listening to the song "Gloria" and marveling at the size of the crowd.

11:54 a.m. South of White House

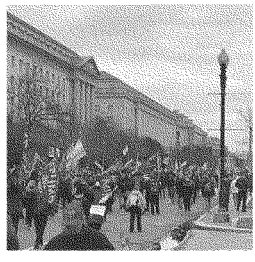


Donald Trump Jr. via Facebook

12:15 p.m.–12:50 p.m.

Capitol Crowds Grow





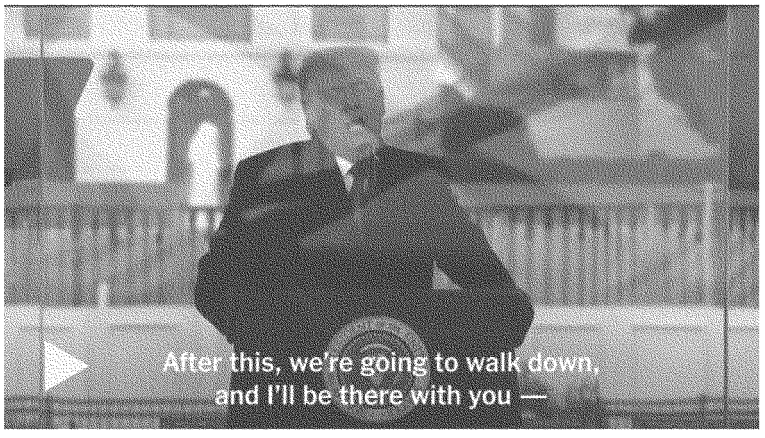
Trump calls for march on Capitol.

A large crowd heads in that direction.

About 15 minutes into his speech, Mr. Trump tells rally attendees to walk to the Capitol. "You have to show strength," he says.

At this moment, the Capitol grounds are protected by temporary perimeter fences, and there are few officers equipped to defend them.

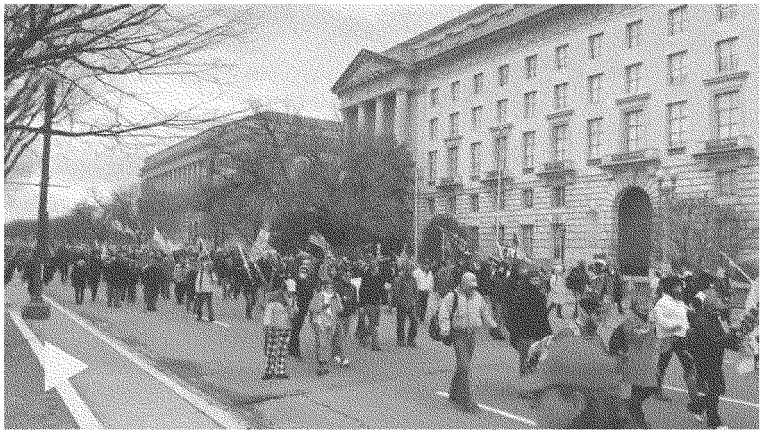
12:17 p.m. South of White House



U.S. Network Pool

Supporters leave the rally in a steady stream before Mr. Trump's speech ends, and they head toward the Capitol.

12:29 p.m. Constitution Ave.



Talia Jane via Twitter

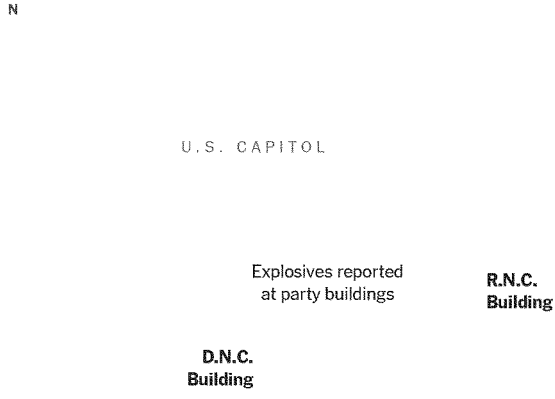
As they arrive, another crowd of Trump supporters that has already gathered along the west perimeter fence becomes more agitated.

12:49 p.m. West of the Capitol grounds



Status Coup via Storyful

Around this time, a pipe bomb is reported at the Republican National Committee building, just a block away from the Capitol. Not long after, another device is discovered nearby at the Democratic National Committee headquarters.



12:53 p.m.–1:03 p.m.

First Barriers Breached



Trump continues speaking.



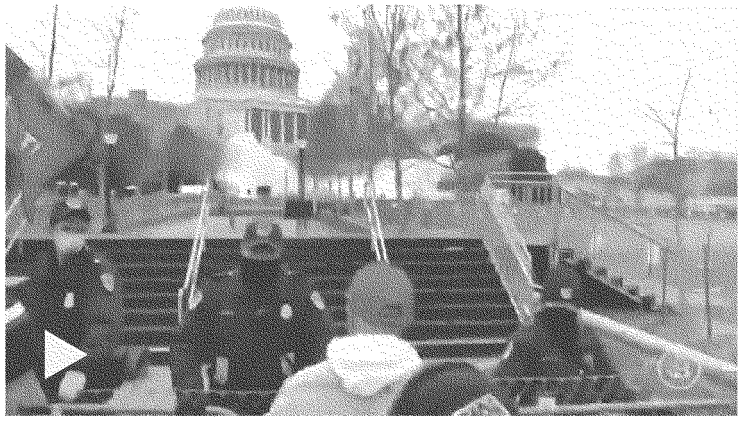
Rioters topple a fence to the Capitol's west.



Congress begins joint session.

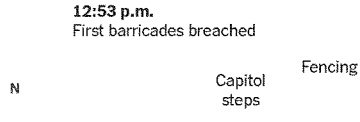
About 20 minutes before Trump's speech ends, some people in the Capitol crowd harass officers posted at the barricades and start to get physical. Others follow suit, until they violently overwhelm the police and breach the building's outer perimeter.

12:53 p.m. Northwest side of the Capitol



Elijah Schaffer via Twitter

The mob quickly breaks through three additional barricades, forcing officers back onto the west Capitol steps.





1 **12:53 p.m.** First barricades breached.

2 **1 p.m.** Joint session of Congress convenes in House chamber.

Once at the steps, the group clashes with a small contingent of officers. After a few minutes, Capitol Police officers in riot gear arrive to help control the crowd.

12:58 p.m. West side of Capitol



Status Coup via Storyful

At this time, the speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, begins the proceedings to certify the Electoral College vote at a joint session of Congress, alongside Vice President Mike Pence.

Outside, the chants begin: "Whose house? Our house!"

1:03 p.m. House Chamber





C-SPAN

1:12 p.m.–2:00 p.m.

Trump's Call to Action



Trump again calls for a march on the Capitol.



Mob continues to clash with police.

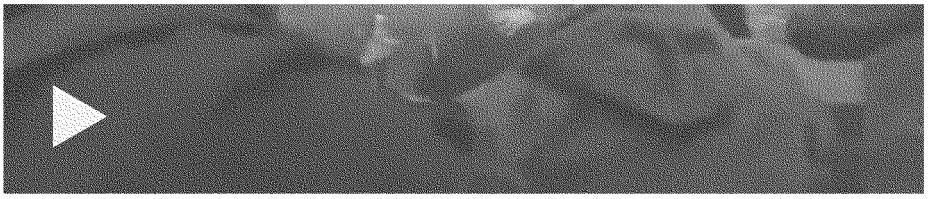


Ted Cruz objects to certification.

As Mr. Trump's speech comes to an end, he calls on his supporters to "walk down Pennsylvania Avenue" toward the Capitol. Rioters there continue to violently clash with officers, including reinforcements from the local police department who have arrived on the scene. Both sides spray chemical agents.

1:15 p.m. West side of Capitol

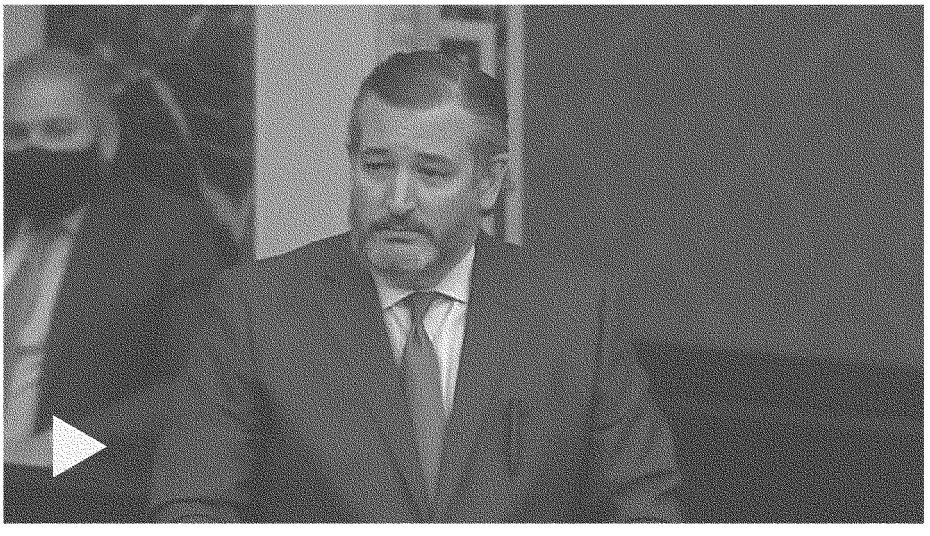




Status Coup via Storyful

Inside the Capitol, members of Congress seem unaware of the extent of the violence outside. The House and Senate have moved to their separate chambers to debate certifying the vote. Senator Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas, argues that the Senate should not certify Arizona's electoral votes.

1:48 p.m. Senate Chamber



C-SPAN

A minute later, Chief Steven Sund of the Capitol Police makes the request for immediate assistance from the D.C. National Guard. Outside, rioters tear through scaffolding in front of the Capitol's northwest steps and make their way closer to the building.

1:50 p.m. West side of Capitol

Lev Radin/Pacific Press/LightRocket via Getty Images

Around 2 p.m.

Assault on the East Side



Groups breach police barricades.



Amy Klobuchar and other legislators debate.

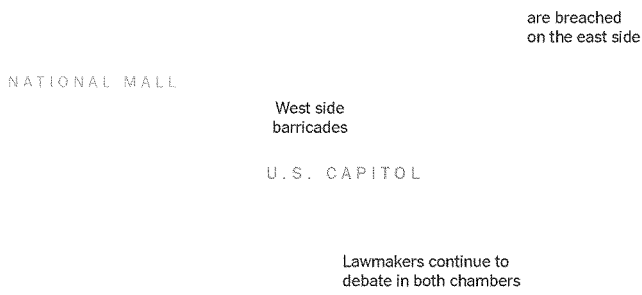
On the east side of the Capitol, where the police presence is much smaller, another mob is about to reach the doors of the building.

Mob continues to riot

Fencing

N

Around 2:00 p.m.
Police barricades



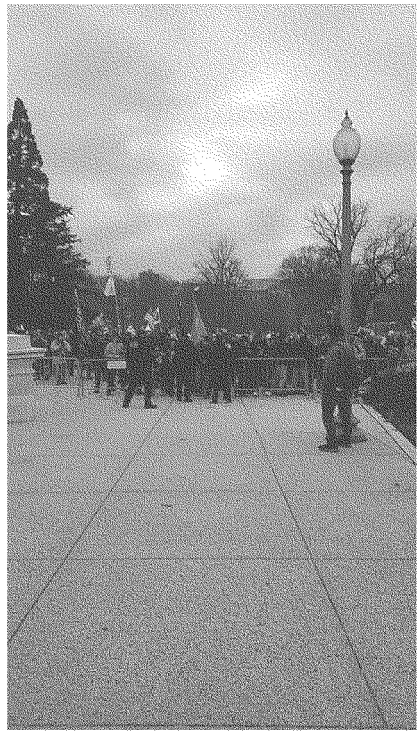
1 **Around 2:00 p.m.** Police barricades are breached on the east side

2 Lawmakers continue to debate in both chambers

3 Mob continues to riot

The police remove a barricade at the northeast corner of the building after violent confrontations between officers and the crowd.

1:58 p.m. Northeast side of Capitol



Marcus DiPaola via TikTok

A YouTube live stream captures the exact moment a massive crowd also breaches a separate, larger barricade on the east side. This is the last physical barrier protecting that side of the Capitol.

2:00 p.m. East side of Capitol



Stephen Ignoramus via YouTube

2:10 p.m.

Mob Reaches Doors on West Side



Group breaches west side barricades.



Legislators continue debate.

Back on the northwest side of the Capitol, another YouTube livestream captures the mob chasing officers up the steps and breaching the final barrier on that side.

2:10 p.m. Northwest side of Capitol





John Sullivan via YouTube

Violent clashes with the police have been ongoing for more than an hour by the time the mob finally breaks through.

The mob approaches an entrance near the Senate chamber, one floor below where senators continue to debate.



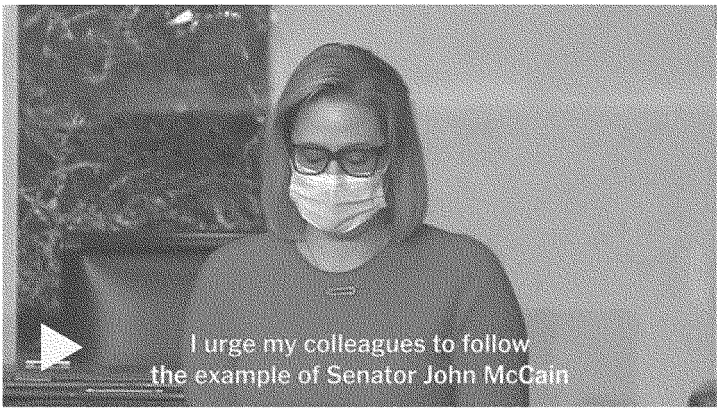
1 **2:10 p.m.** Group breaches the final barrier on the west side

2 Lawmakers continue to debate

Rioters surround the building on both sides, but there's no indication that the lawmakers inside know the extent of the breach. As the mob approaches the doors of the Senate wing, Senator Kyrsten Sinema,

Democrat of Arizona, urges her colleagues to "reject this meritless challenge and uphold the will of Arizona's voters."

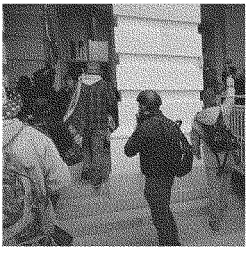
2:10 p.m. Senate Chamber



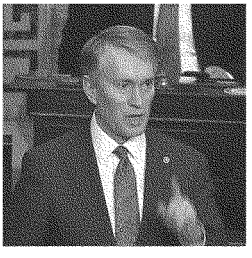
C-SPAN

Around 2:11 p.m. to 2:16 p.m.

Rioters Break Into the Building



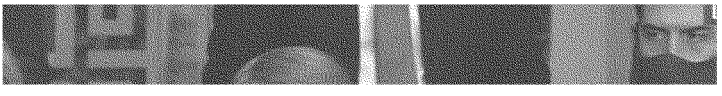
Mob enters the building.

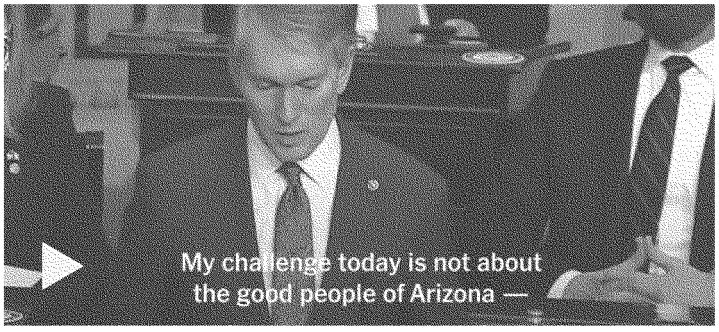


Senators continue debate just steps away.

Rioters on the west side break into the building around 2:11 p.m. Two minutes later, as they reach the stairs next to the Senate chamber, the Senate is called into recess.

2:13 p.m. Senate Chamber





C-SPAN

Rioters continue to stream into the building. They enter through a door and a broken window on the northwest side.

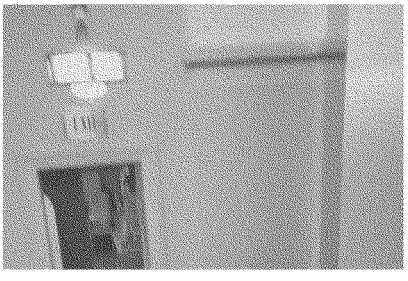
2:15 p.m. Northwest side of Capitol

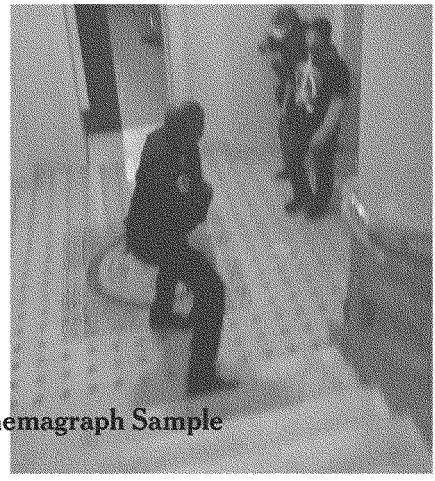


John Sullivan via YouTube

Rioters chase an officer to the top of a staircase where there are entrances to the Senate chamber in both directions.

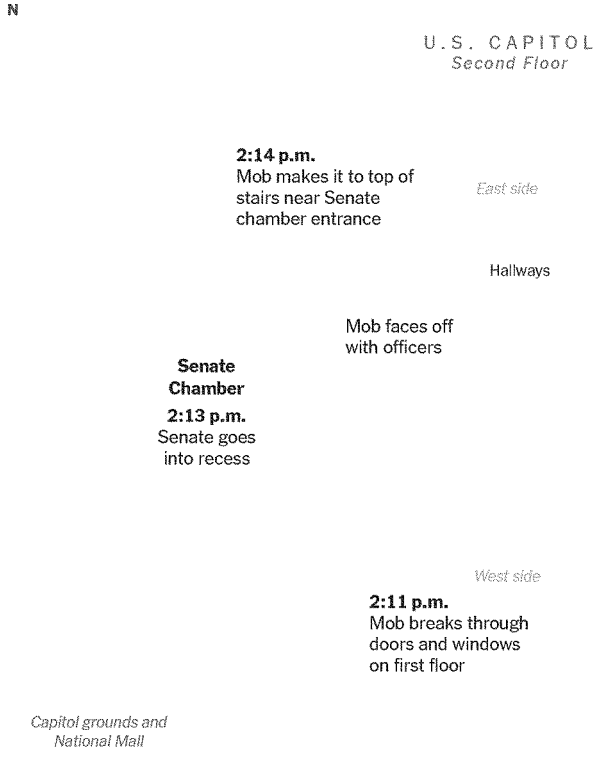
2:14 p.m. Inside the Capitol





Igor Bobic/HuffPost via Storyful

The officer leads the rioters one way, and backup arrives — while the police inside the chamber are still trying to lock the doors.



1 **2:11 p.m.** Mob breaks through doors and windows on first floor
2 **2:13 p.m.** Senate goes into recess
3 **2:14 p.m.** Mob makes it to top of stairs near Senate chamber entrance
4 Mob faces off with officers

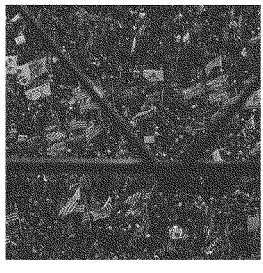
Now rioters stand off with the police in the hall, feet away from the entrance to the Senate chamber. Senators are still milling about inside.

2:16 p.m. Hall outside Senate chamber

Win Mcnamee/Getty Images

After the breach

The Siege Continues



Thousands reach the Capitol.



Congress is halted.

More than five minutes after the first rioters break into the building, the House also goes into recess. Now, the police are clashing with the mob inside the building as some members of Congress are able to evacuate. Others are trapped inside while rioters pound on the doors.

Outside the building, the crowd grows as attendees from President Trump's rally continue to stream in. The mob becomes more violent, dragging and beating officers.

Three hours will pass before the sergeant-at-arms declares the building secure.

2:19 p.m. Near Capitol grounds on the west side

Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA, via Shutterstock

Photo credits: John Minchillo/Associated Press; Andrew Harnik/Associated Press; Olivier Douliery/Agence France-Presse; Greg Nash/Pool via Reuters

Reporting was contributed by Stella Cooper, Cora Engelbrecht, Evan Hill, Robin Stein, Ben Decker and Malachy Browne.
Additional production by Meg Felling, Dave Horn, Whitney Hurst, Christina Kelso and Scott Reinhard.

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Yes, Congress should impeach Trump before he leaves office

Opinion by **Laurence H. Tribe** and **Joshua Matz**

Jan. 8, 2021 at 8:01 p.m. EST

Laurence H. Tribe is the Carl M. Loeb University Professor Emeritus at Harvard and has advised members of Congress on matters of impeachment. Joshua Matz is a partner at Kaplan Hecker & Fink LLP and served as counsel for the House Judiciary Committee during the impeachment and trial of President Trump last year. Together, they wrote "To End A Presidency: The Power of Impeachment."

As the House of Representatives takes the extraordinary step of considering a second impeachment of President Trump during his final days in office, two questions loom large: Did Trump commit impeachable offenses? And does it make sense to impeach even though the Senate may not try and convict him before he leaves office on Jan. 20? The answer to both questions is yes.

Trump spent months convincing his followers, without factual basis, that they were victims of a massive electoral fraud. He summoned them to D.C. for a "wild" protest as Congress met to certify the election results. He then whipped them into a frenzy and aimed the angry horde straight at the Capitol. When Trump's mob breached the building, he inexcusably dawdled in deploying force to quell the riot. And when he finally released a video statement, it only made matters worse.

Simply put, Trump knew perfectly well that his rally on Wednesday was a powder keg of his own creation. But he gleefully lit a match and tossed it at Congress.

The article of impeachment circulated Friday by Democratic Reps. David N. Cicilline (R.I.), Jamie B. Raskin (Md.) and Ted Lieu (Calif.) accurately captures the gravity of Trump's misconduct. It situates his action within his "prior efforts to subvert and obstruct the certification of the results of the 2020 presidential election." And it recognizes the terrible damage that Trump, through his incitement, inflicted on the nation as a whole.

Trump's actions might well qualify as federal crimes. But that determination is beside the point when it comes to measuring impeachable offenses. Impeachment exists to protect us from future threats rather than to punish prior misconduct. It does not require proof of a crime.

Indeed, as the House concluded in December 2019, conduct that may be in some sense permitted by the Constitution (or the criminal code) can still be impeachable if undertaken in a grossly abusive manner or as part of a scheme that imperils democracy. Those who wrote the impeachment clause grasped the threat posed by leaders who deploy mob violence against officials and institutions of government that stand in their way. Faced with Trump's conduct — inciting the most destructive assault on our seat of government since the War of 1812 — they would not have hesitated to act.

Cape Up with Jonathan Capehart | Podcast

Laurence Tribe says Trump should be impeached again — even if a Senate conviction is unlikely



Subscribe

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That's true even though Trump will leave office in just 12 days. The Constitution entrusts the House with "the sole Power of Impeachment," and the Senate with "the sole Power to try all Impeachments." For good reason, the House and Senate have traditionally exercised those powers with considerable due diligence, deliberation and process.

But the Constitution does not require slow motion at times of crisis, especially when the nation witnessed an impeachable offense in real time. Here, holding protracted hearings would be a foolish undertaking, akin to playing a sonata on the decks of the Titanic. The House can and should act with dispatch.

Many considerations support that conclusion. As a matter of principle and precedent, the House must leave no doubt that Trump's conduct is beyond the pale. He came close to destroying the Capitol in pursuit of his antidemocratic effort to overturn an election; an unequivocal response is called for.

Moreover, there is now widespread, bipartisan recognition that Trump will remain a danger to our national security through his final days in office. His obvious lack of remorse and unwillingness to accept responsibility confirm the threat. So do his pattern of placing his personal interests above the law, and his failure to modify his conduct after being impeached last year. With every passing hour that he has the instruments of executive power at his command, the risk that he could do incalculable damage cannot responsibly be ignored.

By approving articles of impeachment, the House would give the Senate the option to swiftly convene, try, convict and remove the president — and, upon a separate vote, disqualify him from future officeholding. To be sure, the Senate may lack the willingness or the time to hold a trial. Still, the very pendency of articles — and the possibility of trial and conviction — may itself chill Trump's worst impulses as he contemplates his final days as president. And it appears as though there is now bipartisan support in the Senate for serious consideration of articles of impeachment.

In any event, if the House approves articles of impeachment but the Senate does not act before he leaves office, those articles will mark the historical record, serve as a valuable deterrent in the interim and draw a line against future abuses. (Scholars debate whether an impeachment may proceed against a former official.)

The impeachment power must never be exercised lightly. But the House would be fully justified in finding that Trump's incitement of mob violence against the United States government warrants that drastic remedy.

Read more:

Ruth Marcus: Four good things that emerged from our nation's horrifying week

Megan McArdle: Yes, the Trump mob distrusts the media. But you can't blame journalists for what happened.

Hugh Hewitt: A fast-track impeachment would not be justice. It would be pointless revenge.

Dana Milbank: This Republican Party needs to go the way of the Whigs

Kathleen Parker: After all this time, the last straw for Donald Trump

Updated January 17, 2021

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Security

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What happened on Jan. 6

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Police turning in police: Off-duty police were part of the Capitol mob

Exclusive: Capitol Police intelligence report warned three days before attack that 'Congress itself' could be targeted

Attacked with bear spray and their own batons: D.C. police describe brutal and chaotic moments

Trump's second impeachment

Unprecedented: House hands Trump a second impeachment, this time with GOP support

Senate impeachment whip count: Where Democrats and Republicans stand

STATEMENTS & RELEASES

Letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi on 25th Amendment Resolution

Issued on: **January 12, 2021**

★ ★ ★

THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

January 12, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

Every American was shocked and saddened by the attack on our Nation's Capitol last week, and I am grateful for the leadership that you and other congressional leaders provided in reconvening Congress to complete the people's business on the very same day. It was a moment that demonstrated to the American people the unity that is still possible in Congress when it is needed most.

But now, with just eight days left in the President's term, you and the Democratic Caucus are demanding that the Cabinet and I invoke the 25th Amendment. I do not believe that such a course of action is in the best interest of our Nation or consistent with our Constitution. Last week, I did not yield to pressure to exert power beyond my constitutional authority to determine the outcome of the election, and I will not now yield to efforts in the House of Representatives to play political games at a time so serious in the life of our Nation.

As you know full well, the 25th Amendment was designed to address Presidential incapacity or disability. Just a few months ago, when you introduced legislation to create a 25th Amendment Commission, you said, "[a] President's fitness for office must be determined by science and facts." You said then that we must be "[v]ery respectful of not making a judgment on the basis of a comment or behavior that we don't like, but based on a medical decision." Madam Speaker, you were right. Under our Constitution, the 25th Amendment is not a means of punishment or usurpation. Invoking the 25th Amendment in such a manner would set a terrible precedent.

After the horrific events of this last week, our Administration's energy is directed to ensuring an orderly transition. The Bible says that "for everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven…a time to heal, ... and a time to build up." That time is now. In the midst of a global pandemic, economic hardship for millions of Americans, and the tragic events of January 6th, now is the time for us to come together, now is the time to heal.

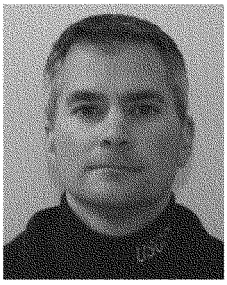
I urge you and every member of Congress to avoid actions that would further divide and inflame the passions of the moment. Work with us to lower the temperature and unite our country as we prepare to inaugurate President-elect Joe Biden as the next President of the United States. I pledge to you that I will continue to do my part to work in good faith with the incoming administration to ensure an orderly transition of power. So help me God.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Pence
Vice President of the United States

Loss of USCP Officer Brian D. Sicknick

January 7, 2021 | Press Release



At approximately 9:30 p.m. this evening (January 7, 2021), United States Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick passed away due to injuries sustained while on-duty.

Officer Sicknick was responding to the riots on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, at the U.S. Capitol and was injured while physically engaging with protesters. He returned to his division office and collapsed. He was taken to a local hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. The death of Officer Sicknick will be investigated by the Metropolitan Police Department's Homicide Branch, the USCP, and our federal partners.

Officer Sicknick joined the USCP in July 2008, and most recently served in the Department's First Responder's Unit.

The entire USCP Department expresses its deepest sympathies to Officer Sicknick's family and friends on their loss, and mourns the loss of a friend and colleague.

We ask that Officer Sicknick's family, and other USCP officers' and their families' privacy be respected during this time.

###

STATEMENT FROM THE FAMILY OF U.S. CAPITOL POLICE OFFICER BRIAN D. SICKNICK
January 11, 2021

There really aren't enough kind words in any language to describe how sweet Brian was. He was truly a lovely, humble soul. We are missing him terribly.

He was sweet natured through and through. Everyone who met him adored him. He also loved his dachshunds dearly, spoiling them, and ensuring they got the best care possible.

He loved his job with the U.S. Capitol Police, and was very passionate about it. He also had an incredible work ethic. He was very serious about showing up to work on time and refused to call out sick unless absolutely necessary.

Our loss of Brian will leave a large hole in our hearts.

The tremendous support we have received from the U.S. Capitol Police, the law enforcement community, and the community as a whole has been overwhelmingly warm and generous. We're very grateful for everyone's kindness during this difficult time.

We will have no further statements and will not be granting media interviews. We ask that our family's privacy be respected during this time.

###

Among the Insurrectionists

newyorker.com/magazine/2021/01/25/among-the-insurrectionists

Luke Mogelson



By the end of President Donald Trump's crusade against American democracy—after a relentless deployment of propaganda, demagoguery, intimidation, and fearmongering aimed at persuading as many Americans as possible to repudiate their country's foundational principles—a single word sufficed to nudge his most fanatical supporters into open insurrection. Thousands of them had assembled on the Mall, in Washington, D.C., on the morning of January 6th, to hear Trump address them from a stage outside the White House. From where I stood, at the foot of the Washington Monument, you had to strain to see his image on a jumbotron that had been set up on Constitution Avenue. His voice, however, projected clearly through powerful speakers as he rehashed the debunked allegations of massive fraud which he'd been propagating for months. Then he summarized the supposed crimes, simply, as "bullshit."

"Bullshit! Bullshit!" the crowd chanted. It was a peculiar mixture of emotion that had become familiar at pro-Trump rallies since he lost the election: half mutinous rage, half gleeful excitement at being licensed to act on it. The profanity signalled a final jettisoning of whatever residual deference to political norms had survived the past four years. In front of me, a middle-aged man wearing a Trump flag as a cape told a young man standing beside him, "There's gonna be a war." His tone was resigned, as if he were at last embracing a truth

that he had long resisted. "I'm ready to fight," he said. The young man nodded. He had a thin mustache and hugged a life-size mannequin with duct tape over its eyes, "*traitor*" scrawled on its chest, and a noose around its neck.

"We want to be *so nice*," Trump said. "We want to be so respectful of everybody, including bad people. We're going to have to fight much harder. And Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us."

About a mile and a half away, at the east end of the Mall, Vice-President Pence and both houses of Congress had convened to certify the Electoral College votes that had made Joe Biden and Kamala Harris the next President and Vice-President of the United States. In December, a hundred and forty Republican representatives—two-thirds of the caucus—had said that they would formally object to the certification of several swing states. Fourteen Republican senators, led by Josh Hawley, of Missouri, and Ted Cruz, of Texas, had joined the effort. The lawmakers lacked the authority to overturn the election, but Trump and his allies had concocted a fantastical alternative: Pence, as the presiding officer of the Senate, could single-handedly nullify votes from states that Biden had won. Pence, though, had advised Congress that the Constitution constrained him from taking such action.

"After this, we're going to walk down, and I'll be there with you," Trump told the crowd. The people around me exchanged looks of astonishment and delight. "We're going to walk down to the Capitol, and we're going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women. We're probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them—because you'll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength."

"No weakness!" a woman cried.

Before Trump had even finished his speech, approximately eight thousand people started moving up the Mall. "We're storming the Capitol!" some yelled.

There was an eerie sense of inexorability, the throngs of Trump supporters advancing up the long lawn as if pulled by a current. Everyone seemed to understand what was about to happen. The past nine weeks had been steadily building toward this moment. On November 7th, mere hours after Biden's win was projected, I attended a protest at the Pennsylvania state capitol, in Harrisburg. Hundreds of Trump supporters, including heavily armed militia members, vowed to revolt. When I asked a man with an assault rifle—a "combat-skills instructor" for a militia called the Pennsylvania Three Percent—how likely he considered the prospect of civil conflict, he told me, "It's coming." Since then, Trump and his allies had done everything they could to spread and intensify this bitter aggrievement. On December 5th, Trump acknowledged, "I've probably worked harder in the last three weeks than I ever have in my life." (He was not talking about managing the pandemic, which since the election has claimed a hundred and fifty thousand American lives.) Militant pro-Trump outfits like the Proud Boys—a national organization dedicated to "reinstating a spirit of Western chauvinism" in America—had been openly gearing up for major violence. In early January,

on Parler, an unfiltered social-media site favored by conservatives, Joe Biggs, a top Proud Boys leader, had written, "Every law makers who breaks their own stupid Fucking laws should be dragged out of office and hung."

On the Mall, a makeshift wooden gallows, with stairs and a rope, had been constructed near a statue of Ulysses S. Grant. Some of the marchers nearby carried Confederate flags. Up ahead, the dull thud of stun grenades could be heard, accompanied by bright flashes. "They need help!" a man shouted. "It's us versus the cops!" Someone let out a rebel yell. Scattered groups wavered, debating whether to join the confrontation. "We lost the Senate—we need to make a stand *now*," a bookish-looking woman in a down coat and glasses appealed to the person next to her. The previous day, a runoff in Georgia had flipped two Republican Senate seats to the Democrats, giving them majority control.

Hundreds of Trump supporters had forced their way past barricades to the Capitol steps. In anticipation of Biden's Inauguration, bleachers had been erected there, and the sides of the scaffolding were wrapped in ripstop tarpaulin. Officers in riot gear blocked an open flap in the fabric; the mob pressed against them, screaming insults.

"You are traitors to the country!" a man barked at the police through a megaphone plastered with stickers from "InfoWars," the incendiary Web program hosted by the right-wing conspiracist Alex Jones. Behind the man stood Biggs, the Proud Boys leader. He wore a radio clipped onto the breast pocket of his plaid flannel shirt. Not far away, I spotted a "straight pride" flag.

There wasn't nearly enough law enforcement to fend off the mob, which pelted the officers with cans and bottles. One man angrily invoked the pandemic lockdown: "Why can't *I* work? Where's my 'pursuit of happiness'?" Many people were equipped with flak jackets, helmets, gas masks, and tactical apparel. Guns were prohibited for the protest, but a man in a cowboy hat, posing for a photograph, lifted his jacket to reveal a revolver tucked into his waistband. Other Trump supporters had Tasers, baseball bats, and truncheons. I saw one man holding a coiled noose.

"Hang Mike Pence!" people yelled.

On the day Joe Biden's win was projected, hundreds of Trump supporters protested at the Pennsylvania state capitol.Photograph by Balazs Gardi for The New Yorker

Soon the mob swarmed past the officers, into the understructure of the bleachers, and scrambled through its metal braces, up the building's granite steps. Toward the top was a temporary security wall with three doors, one of which was instantly breached. Dozens of police stood behind the wall, using shields, nightsticks, and pepper spray to stop people from crossing the threshold. Other officers took up positions on planks above, firing a steady barrage of nonlethal munitions into the solid mass of bodies. As rounds tinked off metal, and

caustic chemicals filled the space as if it were a fumigation tent, some of the insurrectionists panicked: "We need to retreat and assault another point!" But most remained resolute. "Hold the line!" they exhorted. "Storm!" Martial bagpipes blared through portable speakers.

"Shoot the politicians!" somebody yelled.

"Fight for Trump!"

A jet of pepper spray incapacitated me for about twenty minutes. When I regained my vision, the mob was streaming freely through all three doors. I followed an overweight man in a Roman-era costume—sandals, cape, armguards, dagger—away from the bleachers and onto an open terrace on the Capitol's main level. People clambered through a shattered window. Video later showed that a Proud Boy had smashed it with a riot shield. A dozen police stood in a hallway softly lit by ornate chandeliers, mutely watching the rioters—many of them wearing Trump gear or carrying Trump flags—flood into the building. Their cries resonated through colonnaded rooms: "Where's the traitors?" "Bring them out!" "Get these fucking cocksucking Commies out!"

The attack on the Capitol was a predictable apotheosis of a months-long ferment. Throughout the pandemic, right-wing protesters had been gathering at statehouses, demanding entry. In April, an armed mob had filled the Michigan state capitol, chanting "Treason!" and "Let us in!" In December, conservatives had broken the glass doors of the Oregon state capitol, overrunning officers and spraying them with chemical agents. The occupation of restricted government sanctums was an affirmation of dominance so emotionally satisfying that it was an end in itself—proof to elected officials, to Biden voters, and also to the occupiers themselves that they were still in charge. After one of the Trump supporters breached the U.S. Capitol, he insisted through a megaphone, "We will *not* be denied." There was an unmistakable subtext as the mob, almost entirely white, shouted, "Whose house? *Our* house!" One man carried a Confederate flag through the building. A Black member of the Capitol Police later told BuzzFeed News that, during the assault, he was called a racial slur fifteen times.

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I followed a group that broke off to advance on five policemen guarding a side corridor. "Stand down," a man in a *maga* hat commanded. "You're outnumbered. There's a fucking million of us out there, and we are listening to Trump—your boss."

"We can take you out," a man beside him warned.

The officers backpedalled the length of the corridor, until we arrived at a marble staircase. Then they moved aside. "We love you guys—take it easy!" a rioter yelled as he bounded up the steps, which led to the Capitol's central rotunda.

On an open terrace on the U.S. Capitol's main level, Trump supporters clambered through a shattered window. "Where's the traitors?" they shouted.Photograph by Balazs Gardi for The New Yorker

Beneath the soaring dome, surrounded by statues of former Presidents and by large oil paintings depicting such historical scenes as the embarkation of the Pilgrims and the presentation of the Declaration of Independence, a number of young men chanted, "America first!" The phrase was popularized in 1940 by Nazi sympathizers lobbying to keep the U.S. out of the Second World War; in 2016, Trump resurrected it to describe his isolationist foreign and immigration policies. Some of the chanters, however, waved or wore royal-blue flags inscribed with "*AF*," in white letters. This is the logo for the program "America First," which is hosted by Nicholas Fuentes, a twenty-two-year-old Holocaust denier, who promotes a brand of white Christian nationalism that views politics as a means of preserving demographic supremacy. Though America Firsters revile most mainstream Republicans for lacking sufficient commitment to this priority—especially neoconservatives, whom they accuse of being subservient to Satan and Jews—the group's loyalty to Trump is, according to Fuentes, "unconditional."

The America Firsters and other invaders fanned out in search of lawmakers, breaking into offices and revelling in their own astounding impunity. "Nancy, I'm *ho-ome!* " a man taunted, mimicking Jack Nicholson's character in "The Shining." Someone else yelled, "1776—it's now or never." Around this time, Trump tweeted, "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country. . . . USA demands the truth!" Twenty minutes later, Ashli Babbitt, a thirty-five-year-old woman from California, was fatally shot while climbing through a barricaded door that led to the Speaker's lobby in the House chamber, where representatives were sheltering. The congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a Democrat from New York, later said that she'd had a "close encounter" with rioters during which she thought she "was going to die." Earlier that morning, another representative, Lauren Boebert—a newly elected Republican, from Colorado, who has praised QAnon and promised to wear her Glock in the Capitol—had tweeted, "Today is 1776."

When Babbitt was shot, I was on the opposite side of the Capitol, where people were growing frustrated by the empty halls and offices.

"Where the fuck *are* they?"

"Where the fuck is Nancy?"

No one seemed quite sure how to proceed. "While we're here, we might as well set up a government," somebody suggested.

Then a man with a large "*AF* " flag—college-age, cheeks spotted with acne—pushed through a series of tall double doors, the last of which gave onto the Senate chamber.

"Praise God!"

There were signs of a hasty evacuation: bags and purses on the plush blue-and-red carpet, personal belongings on some of the desks. From the gallery, a man in a flak jacket called down, "Take everything! Take all that shit!"

"No!" an older man, who wore an ammo vest and held several plastic flex cuffs, shouted. "We do not take anything." The man has since been identified as Larry Rendall Brock, Jr., a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel.

The young America Firster went directly to the dais and installed himself in the leather chair recently occupied by the Vice-President. Another America Firster filmed him extemporizing a speech: "Donald Trump is the emperor of the United States . . ."

"Hey, get out of that chair," a man about his age, with a thick Southern drawl, said. He wore cowhide work gloves and a camouflage hunting jacket that was several sizes too large for him. Gauze hung loosely around his neck, and blood, leaking from a nasty wound on his cheek, encrusted his beard. Later, when another rioter asked for his name, he responded, "Mr. Black." The America Firster turned and looked at him uncertainly.

"We're a democracy," Mr. Black said.

"Bro, we just broke into the Capitol," the America Firster scoffed. "What are you talking about?"

Brock, the Air Force veteran, said, "We can't be disrespectful." Using the military acronym for "information operations," he explained, "You have to understand—it's an I.O. war."

Watch: A Reporter's Footage From Inside the Capitol Siege

The America Firster grudgingly left the chair. More than a dozen Trump supporters filed into the chamber. A hundred antique mahogany desks with engraved nameplates were arranged in four tiered semicircles. Several people swung open the hinged desktops and began rifling through documents inside, taking pictures with their phones of private notes and letters, partly completed crossword puzzles, manuals on Senate procedure. A man in a construction hard hat held up a hand-signed document, on official stationery, addressed from "Mitt" to "Mike"—presumably, Romney and Pence. It was the speech that Romney had given, in February, 2020, when he voted to impeach Trump for pressuring the President of Ukraine to produce dirt on Biden. "Corrupting an election to keep oneself in office is perhaps the most abusive and disruptive violation of one's oath of office that I can imagine," Romney had written.

Armed militia members attended a Stop the Steal rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on November 7th.Photograph by Balazs Gardi for The New Yorker

Some senators had printed out their prepared remarks for the election certification that the insurrectionists had disrupted. The man in the hard hat found a piece of paper belonging to Ted Cruz and said, "He was gonna sell us out all along—look! 'Objection to counting the electoral votes of the state of Arizona.' " He paused. "Oh, wait, that's actually O.K."

"He's with us," an America Firster said.

Another young man, wearing sweatpants and a long-sleeved undershirt, seemed unconvinced. Frantically flipping through a three-ring binder on Cruz's desk, he muttered, "There's gotta be something in here we can fucking use against these scumbags." Someone looking on commented, with serene confidence, "Cruz would *want* us to do this, so I think we're good."

Mr. Black wandered around in a state of childlike wonder. "This don't look big enough," he muttered. "This can't be the right place." On January 14th, Joshua Black was arrested, in Leeds, Alabama, after he posted a confession on YouTube in which he explained, "I just felt like the spirit of God wanted me to go in the Senate room." On the day of the riot, as he took in the chamber, he ordered everyone, "Don't trash the place. No disrespect." After a while, rather than defy him, nearly everybody left the chamber. For a surreal interlude, only a few people remained. Black's blood-smeared cheek was grotesquely swollen, and as I looked closer I glimpsed the smooth surface of a yellow plastic projectile embedded deeply within it.

"I'm gonna call my dad," he said, and sat down on the floor, leaning his back against the dais.

A moment later, the door at the back of the chamber's center aisle swung open, and a man strode through it wearing a fur headdress with horns, carrying a spear attached to an American flag. He was shirtless, his chest covered with Viking and pagan tattoos, his face painted red, white, and blue. It was Jacob Chansley, a vocal QAnon proponent from Arizona, popularly known by his pseudonym, the Q Shaman. Both on the Mall and inside the Capitol, I'd seen countless signs and banners promoting QAnon, whose acolytes believe that Trump is working to dismantle an occult society of cannibalistic pedophiles. At the base of the Washington Monument, I'd watched Chansley assure people, "We got 'em right where we want 'em! We got 'em by the balls, baby, and we're not lettin' go!"

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"*Fuckin' A*, man," he said now, looking around with an impish grin. A young policeman had followed closely behind him. Pudgy and bespectacled, with a medical mask over red facial hair, he approached Black, and asked, with concern, "You good, sir? You need medical attention?"

"I'm good, thank you," Black responded. Then, returning to his phone call, he said, "I got shot in the face with some kind of plastic bullet."

"Any chance I could get you guys to leave the Senate wing?" the officer inquired. It was the tone of someone trying to lure a suicidal person into climbing down from a ledge.

"We will," Black assured him. "I been making sure they ain't disrespectin' the place."

"O.K., I just want to let you guys know—this is, like, *the* sacredest place."

Chansley had climbed onto the dais. "I'm gonna take a seat in this chair, because Mike Pence is a fucking traitor," he announced. He handed his cell phone to another Trump supporter, telling him, "I'm not one to usually take pictures of myself, but in this case I think I'll make an exception." The policeman looked on with a pained expression as Chansley flexed his biceps.

Rioters forced their way past barricades to the Capitol steps, over which bleachers had been erected in anticipation of Biden's Inauguration. There wasn't nearly enough law enforcement to fend off the mob.Photograph by Balazs Gardi for The New Yorker

A skinny man in dark clothes told the officer, "This is so weird—like, you should be stopping us."

The officer pointed at each person in the chamber: "One, two, three, four, five." Then he pointed at himself: "One." After Chansley had his photographs, the officer said, "Now that you've done that, can I get you guys to walk out of this room, please?"

"Yes, sir," Chansley said. He stood up and took a step, but then stopped. Leaning his spear against the Vice-President's desk, he found a pen and wrote something on a sheet of paper.

"I feel like you're pushing the line," the officer said.

Chansley ignored him. After he had set down the pen, I went behind the desk. Over a roll-call list of senators' names, the Q Shaman had scrawled, "*its only a matter of time / justice is coming*!"

The Capitol siege was so violent and chaotic that it has been hard to discern the specific political agendas of its various participants. Many of them, however, went to D.C. for two previous events, which were more clarifying. On November 14th, tens of thousands of Republicans, convinced that the Democrats had subverted the will of the people in what amounted to a bloodless coup, marched to the Supreme Court, demanding that it overturn the election. For four years, Trump had batted away every inconvenient fact with the phrase "fake news," and his base believed him when he attributed his decisive defeat in both the Electoral College and the popular vote to "rigged" machines and "massive voter fraud." While the President's lawyers inundated battleground states with spurious litigation, one of them, during an interview on Fox Business, acknowledged the basis of their strategy: "We're waiting for the United States Supreme Court, of which the President has nominated three Justices, to step in and do something." After nearly every suit had collapsed—with judges appointed by Republicans and Democrats alike harshly criticizing the accusations as "speculative," "incorrect," and "not credible," and Trump's own Justice Department vouching

for the integrity of the election—the attorney general of Texas petitioned the Supreme Court to invalidate all the votes from Wisconsin, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Michigan (swing states that went for Biden). On December 11th, the night before the second D.C. demonstration, the Justices declined to hear the case, dispelling once and for all the fantasy that Trump, despite losing the election, might legally remain in office.

The next afternoon, throngs of Trump supporters crowded into Freedom Plaza, an unadorned public square equidistant from the Justice Department and the White House. On one side, a large audience pressed around a group of preppy-looking young men wearing plaid shirts, windbreakers, khakis, and sunglasses. Some held rosaries and crosses, others royal-blue "*AF*" flags. The organizers had not included Fuentes, the "America First" host, in their lineup, but when he arrived at Freedom Plaza the crowd parted for him, chanting, "Groyper!" The name, which America Firsters call one another, derives from a variation of the Pepe the Frog meme, which is fashionable among white supremacists.

Diminutive and clean-shaven, with boyish features and a toothy smile, Fuentes resembled, in his suit and red tie, a recent graduate dressed for a job interview. (He dropped out of Boston University after his freshman year, when other students became hostile toward him for participating in the deadly neo-Nazi rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017, and for writing on Facebook that "a tidal wave of white identity is coming.") Fuentes climbed atop a granite retaining wall, and someone handed him a megaphone. As his speech approached a crescendo of indignation, more and more attendees gravitated to the groypers. "It is *us* and *our* ancestors that created everything good that you see in this country," Fuentes said. "All these people that have taken over our country—we do not need them."

The crowd roared, "Take it back!"—a phrase that would soon ring inside the Capitol.

"It's time for us to start saying another word again," Fuentes shouted. "A very important word that describes the situation we're in. That word is 'parasite.' What is happening in this country is parasitism." Arguing that Trump alone represented "*our* interests"—an end to all legal and illegal immigration, gay rights, abortion, free trade, and secularism—Fuentes distilled America Firstism into concise terms: "It is the American people, and our leader, Donald Trump, against *everybody else* in this country and this world." The Republican governors, judges, and legislators who had refused to leverage their authority to secure Trump four more years in the White House—"traitors within our own ranks"—were on "a list" of people to be taken down. Fuentes also opposed the Constitution's checks and balances, which had enabled Biden to prevail. "Make no mistake about it," he declared. "The system is our enemy."

During the nine weeks between November 3rd and January 6th, extremists like Fuentes did their utmost to take advantage of the opening that Trump created for them by refusing to concede. They were frank about their intentions: undoing not just the 2020 Presidential outcome but also any form of representative government that allows Democrats to obtain and exercise power. Correctly pointing out that a majority of Republicans believed that the

election had been stolen, Fuentes argued, "This is the opportunity to galvanize the patriots of this country behind a real solution to these problems that we're facing." He also said, "If we can't get a country that we deserve to live in through the legitimate process, then maybe we need to begin to explore some other options." In case anybody was confused about what those options might be, Fuentes explained, "Our Founding Fathers would get in the streets, and they would take this country back by force if necessary. And that is what we must be prepared to do."

In the days before January 6th, calls for a "real solution" became progressively louder. Trump, by both amplifying these voices and consolidating his control over the Republican Party, conferred extraordinary influence on the most deranged and hateful elements of the American right. On December 20th, he retweeted a QAnon supporter who used the handle @cjtruth: "It was a rigged election but they were busted. Sting of the Century! Justice is coming!" A few weeks later, a barbarian with a spear was sitting in the Vice-President's chair.

As Fuentes wrapped up his diatribe, he noticed a drag queen standing on the periphery of the crowd. She wore a blond wig and an evening gown with a beauty-queen sash identifying her as Lady *maga*. At the November D.C. rally, I had been surprised to see Trump supporters lining up to have their pictures taken with her. Now Fuentes yelled, "That is disgusting! I don't want to see that!," and the groypers wheeled on her, bellowing in unison, "Shame!"

No one in the crowd objected.

While Fuentes was proposing a movement to "take this country back by force," a large contingent of Proud Boys marched by. Members from Illinois, Pennsylvania, Oregon, California, and elsewhere were easy to identify. Most were dressed in the organization's black-and-yellow colors. Some had "*rwds*"—Right-Wing Death Squad—hats and patches; others wore balaclavas, kilts, hockey masks, or batting helmets. One man was wearing a T-shirt with an image of South American dissidents being thrown out of a helicopter and the words "*pinochet did nothing wrong*!" Another T-shirt featured a Nazi eagle perched on a fasces, below the acronym "*6mwe*"—Six Million Wasn't Enough—a reference to the number of Jews slaughtered in the Holocaust.

Many of the Proud Boys were drunk. At around nine-thirty that morning, I'd stopped by Harry's Pub, a dive bar close to Freedom Plaza, and found the street outside filled with men drinking Budweiser and White Claw. "We are going to own this town!" one of them howled. At the November 14th rally, clashes between the Proud Boys and antifascists had left a number of people injured. Although most of the fights I witnessed then had been instigated by the Proud Boys, Trump had tweeted, "ANTIFA SCUM ran for the hills today when they tried attacking the people at the Trump Rally, because those people aggressively fought back." It was clear that the men outside Harry's on December 12th had travelled to D.C. to engage in violence, and that they believed the President endorsed their doing so. Trump had made an appearance at the previous rally, waving through the window of his limousine; now I overheard a Proud Boy tell his comrade, "I wanna see Trump drive by and give us one of

these." He flashed an "O.K." hand sign, which has become a gesture of allegiance among white supremacists. There would be no motorcade this time, but while Fuentes addressed the groypers Trump circled Freedom Plaza in Marine One, the Presidential helicopter.

The conspiracist Alex Jones dominated a pro-Trump rally on November 14th. "Down with the deep state!" Jones yelled. "The answer to their '1984' tyranny is 1776!"Photograph by Balazs Gardi for The New Yorker

The Proud Boys who marched past Fuentes at the end of his December 12th speech were heading to the Washington Monument. When I got there, hundreds of them covered the grassy expanse near the obelisk. "Let's take Black Lives Matter Plaza!" someone suggested. In June, the security fence around the White House had been expanded, subsuming green spaces previously open to the public, in response to protests over the killing of George Floyd, in Minneapolis. Muriel Bowser, the mayor of D.C., had renamed two blocks adjacent to the fence Black Lives Matter Plaza, and commissioned the city to paint "*black lives matter*" across the pavement in thirty-five-foot-high letters. Throughout the latter half of 2020, Trump had sought to dismiss the popular uprisings that Floyd's death had precipitated by ascribing them to Antifa, which he vilified as a terrorist organization. The Proud Boys had seized on Trump's conflation to recast their small-scale rivalry with antifascists in leftist strongholds like Berkeley and Portland as the front line of a national culture war. During the Presidential campaign, Trump's histrionic exaggerations of the threat posed by Antifa fuelled conservative support for the Proud Boys, allowing them to vastly expand their operations and recruitment. The day after a Presidential debate in which Trump told the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by," Lauren Witzke, a Republican Senate candidate in Delaware, publicly thanked the group for having provided her with "free security." (She lost the race.)

As Proud Boys from across the nation walked downhill from the Washington Monument toward Black Lives Matter Plaza on December 12th, they chanted, "Whose plaza? *Our* plaza!" Many of them carried staffs, canes, and holstered Maglites. There was a heavy police presence downtown, and it was still broad daylight. "We got numbers, let's do this!" a Proud Boy with a newsboy cap and a gray goatee shouted. "Fuck these gender-confused terrorists! They'll put the girls out first—they think that's gonna stop us?" His name was Richard Schwetz, though he went by Dick Sweats. (He could not be reached for comment.) While some Proud Boys hesitated, others followed Schwetz, including a taciturn man with a high-and-tight military haircut and a large Confederate flag attached to a wooden dowel. I saw him again at the Capitol on January 6th.

On Constitution Avenue, the Proud Boys encountered an unsuspecting Black man coming up the sidewalk. They began shoving and jeering at him. As the man ran away, several of them chased him, swinging punches at his back.

Officers had cordoned off Black Lives Matter Plaza, but the group soon reached Farragut Square, where half a dozen counter-protesters—two men and four women—stood outside the Army and Navy Club, dressed in black clothes marked with medic crosses made from red

tape. They were smaller and younger than most of the Proud Boys, and visibly unnerved. As Schwetz and others closed in on them, the medics retreated until they were pressed against a waist-high hedge. "Fucking pussies!" Schwetz barked, hitting two of the women. Other Proud Boys took his cue, assailing the activists, who disappeared into the hedge under a barrage of boots and fists. Policemen stopped the beating by deploying pepper spray, but they did not arrest any Proud Boys, who staggered off in search of a new target.

They promptly found one: another Black man, passing through on his bicycle. He wore Lycra exercise gear and looked perplexed by what was happening on the streets. He said nothing to anybody, but "Black Lives Matter" was written in small letters on his helmet. The Proud Boys surrounded him. Pointing at some officers watching from a few feet away, a man in a bulletproof vest, carrying a cane, said, "They're here now, but eventually they won't be. And we're gonna take this country back—believe that shit. Fuck Black Lives Matter." Before walking off, he added, "What y'all need to do is take your sorry asses to the ghetto."

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This was the tenor of the next eight hours, as hundreds of Proud Boys, groypers, militia members, and other Trump supporters openly marauded on the streets around the White House, becoming more inebriated and belligerent as the night wore on, hunting for people to harass and assault. "Fight for Trump!" they chanted. At one point, Proud Boys outside Harry's Pub ganged up on another Black man, Philip Johnson, who took out a knife in self-defense, wounding four of them. Police intervened and rushed Johnson to the hospital, where he was arrested. The charges were later dropped. Outside Harry's, I heard a Proud Boy joking about Johnson's injuries: "He's going to look different tomorrow."

Shortly thereafter, I followed a number of groypers past a hair salon with a rainbow poster attached to its window. Tearing the poster to pieces, a young man screamed, "This is sodomy!"

"Fuck the fags!" others cried.

By eleven, I was following another group, which happened upon the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church. Built in the late nineteenth century, the steepled red brick building had hosted the funerals of Frederick Douglass and Rosa Parks. President Barack Obama had attended a service there on the morning of his second Inauguration. Outside the entrance, a large Black Lives Matter sign, illuminated by floodlamps, hung below a crucifix. Climbing over a low fence, several Proud Boys and men in red *maga* hats ripped down the sign and pried off boards from its scaffolding to use as weapons, eliciting wild cheers.

"Whose streets?"

"*Our* streets!"

December 12th, just after 11 P.M., outside the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church.

More people piled into the garden of the church, stomping on the sign and slashing it with knives. Amid the frenzy, one of the Trump supporters removed another placard from a different display. It had a verse from the Bible: "*I shall not sacrifice to the Lord my God that which costs me nothing.*"

"Hey, that's Christian," someone admonished.

The man nodded and gingerly set the placard down.

The cascade of destruction and ugliness triggered by Trump's lies about the election consummates a narrative that predates his tenure in the White House. In 2011, Trump became an evangelist for birtherism, the false assertion that Obama had been born in Kenya and was therefore an illegitimate President. Whether or not Trump believed the racist slander, he had been apprised of its political utility by his friend Roger Stone, who made his political reputation as a dirty trickster for President Richard Nixon. Five years later, in the months before the 2016 election, Stone created a Web site called Stop the Steal, which he used to undermine Hillary Clinton's expected victory by insisting that the election had been rigged—a position that Trump maintained even after he won, to explain his deficit in the popular vote.

The day after the 2020 election, a new Facebook page appeared: Stop the Steal. Among its earliest posts was a video from the T.C.F. Center, in downtown Detroit, where Michigan ballots were counted. The video showed Republican protesters who were said to have been denied access to the room where absentee votes were being processed. Overnight, Stop the Steal gained more than three hundred and twenty thousand followers—making it among the fastest-growing groups in Facebook history. The company quickly deleted it.

I spent much of Election Day at the T.C.F. Center. *covid*-19 had killed three thousand residents of Wayne County, which includes Detroit, causing an unprecedented number of people to vote by mail. Nearly two hundred thousand absentee ballots were being tallied in a huge exhibit hall. Roughly eight hundred election workers were opening envelopes, removing ballots from sealed secrecy sleeves, and logging names into an electronic poll book. (Before Election Day, the clerk's office had compared and verified signatures.) The ballots were then brought to a row of high-speed tabulators, which could process some fifty sheets a minute.

Republican and Democratic challengers roamed the hall. The press was confined to a taped-off area, but, as far as I could see, the Republicans were given free rein of the space. They checked computer monitors that displayed a growing list of names. A man's voice came over a loudspeaker to remind the election workers to "provide for transparency and openness." Christopher Thomas, who served as Michigan's election director for thirty-six years and

advised the clerk's office in 2020, told me that things had gone remarkably smoothly. The few challengers who'd raised objections had mostly misunderstood technical aspects of the process. "We work through it with them," Thomas said. "We're happy to have them here."

Early returns showed Trump ahead in Michigan, but many absentee ballots had yet to be processed. Because Trump had relentlessly denigrated absentee voting throughout the campaign, in-person votes had been expected to skew his way. It was similarly unsurprising when his lead diminished after results arrived from Wayne County and other heavily Democratic jurisdictions. Nonetheless, shortly after midnight, Trump launched his post-election misinformation campaign: "We are up BIG, but they are trying to STEAL the Election."

A makeshift wooden gallows, with stairs and a rope, was erected near the Capitol on January 6th. Since November, militant pro-Trump outfits had been openly gearing up for major violence. In early January, on Parler, a Proud Boys leader had written, "Every law makers who breaks their own stupid Fucking laws should be dragged out of office and hung."Photograph by Balazs Gardi for The New Yorker

The next day, I found an angry mob outside the T.C.F. Center. Police officers guarded the doors. Most of the protesters had driven down from Macomb County, which is eighty per cent white and went for Trump in both 2016 and 2020. "We know what's going on here," one man told me. "They're stuffing the ballot box." He said that his local Republican Party had sent out an e-mail urging people to descend on the center. Politico later reported that Laura Cox, the chairwoman of the Michigan G.O.P., had personally implored conservative activists to go there. I had seen Cox introduce Trump at a rally in Grand Rapids the night before the election; she had promised the crowd "four more years—or twelve, we'll talk about that later."

Dozens of protesters had entered the T.C.F. Center before it was sealed. Downstairs, they pressed against a glass wall of the exhibit hall, chanting at the election workers on the other side. The most strident member of the group was Ken Licari, a Macomb County resident with a thin beard and a receding hairline. The two parties had been allocated one challenger for each table in the hall, but Republicans had already exceeded that limit, and Licari was irate about being shut out. When an elderly A.C.L.U. observer was ushered past him, Licari demanded to know where she was from. The woman ignored him, and he shouted, "You're a coward, is where you're from!"

"Be civil," a woman standing near him said. A forty-eight-year-old caretaker named Lisa, she had stopped by the convention center on a whim, "just to see." Unlike almost everyone else there, Lisa was Black and from Detroit. She gently asked Licari, "If this place has cameras, and you've got media observing, you've got different people from both sides looking—why do you think someone would be intentionally trying to cheat with all those eyes?"

"You would have to have a hundred thirty-four cameras to track every ballot," Licari answered.

"These ballots are from Detroit," Lisa said. "Detroit is an eighty-per-cent African-American city. There's a huge percentage of Democrats. That's just a fact." She gestured at the predominantly Black poll workers across the glass. "This is my whole thing—I have a basic level of respect for these people."

Rather than respond to this tacit accusation of bias, Licari told Lisa that a batch of illegal ballots had been clandestinely delivered to the center at three in the morning. This was a reference to another cell-phone video, widely shared on social media, that showed a man removing a case from the back of a van, loading it in a wagon, and pulling the wagon into the building. I had watched the video and had recognized the man as a member of a local TV news crew I'd noticed the previous day. I distinctly recall admiring the wagon, which he had used to transport his camera gear.

"There's a lot of suspicious activity that goes on down here in Detroit," another Republican from Macomb County told me. "There's a million ways you can commit voter fraud, and we're afraid it was committed on a massive scale." I had seen the man on Election Day, working as a challenger inside the exhibit hall. Now, as then, he wore old Army dog tags and a hooded Michigan National Guard sweatshirt with the sleeves cut off. I asked him if he had observed any fraud with his own eyes. He had not. "It wasn't committed by *these* people," he said. "But the ballots that they were given and ran through the scanners—we don't know where they came from."

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Like many of the Republicans in the T.C.F. Center, the man had been involved in anti-lockdown demonstrations against Michigan's governor, Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat. While reporting on those protests, I'd been struck by how the mostly white participants saw themselves as upholding the tradition of the civil-rights movement. Whitmer's public-health measures were condemned as oppressive infringements on sacrosanct liberties, and those who defied them compared themselves to Rosa Parks. The equivalency became even more bizarre after George Floyd was killed and anti-lockdown activists in Michigan adopted Trump's law-and-order rhetoric. Yet I never had the impression that those Republican activists were disingenuous. Similarly, the white people shouting at the Black election workers in Detroit seemed truly convinced of their own persecution.

That conviction had been instilled at least in part by politicians who benefitted from it. In April, in response to Whitmer's aggressive public-health measures, Trump had tweeted, "Liberate Michigan!" Two weeks later, heavily armed militia members entered the state capitol, terrifying lawmakers. Mike Shirkey, the Republican majority leader in the Michigan Senate, denounced the organizers of the action—a group called the American Patriot Council—as "a bunch of jackasses" who had brandished "the threat of physical harm to stir up fear and rancor." But, as Trump and other Republicans stoked anti-lockdown resentment across the U.S., Shirkey reversed himself. In May, he appeared at an American Patriot Council event

in Grand Rapids, where he told the assembled militia members, "We need you now more than ever." A few months later, two brothers in the audience that day, William and Michael Null, were arrested for providing material support to a network of right-wing terrorists.

Trump supporters inside the Capitol on January 6th. For right-wing protesters, the occupation of restricted government sanctums was an affirmation of dominance so emotionally satisfying that it was an end in itself—proof to elected officials, to Biden voters, and also to themselves that they were still in charge.Photograph by Balazs Gardi for The New Yorker

Outside the T.C.F. Center, I ran into Michelle Gregoire, a twenty-nine-year-old school-bus driver from Battle Creek. The sleeves of her sweatshirt were pushed up to reveal a "We the People" tattoo, and she wore a handgun on her belt. We had met at several anti-lockdown protests, including the one in Grand Rapids where Shirkey spoke. In April, Gregoire had entered the gallery overlooking the House chamber in the Michigan state capitol, in violation of *COVID*-19 protocols. She had to be dragged out by the chief sergeant at arms, and she is now charged with committing a felony assault against him. (She has pleaded not guilty.)

Gregoire is also an acquaintance of the Nulls. "They're innocent," she told me in Detroit. "There's an attack on conservatives right now." She echoed many Republicans I have met in the past nine months who have described to me the same animating emotion: fear. "A lot of conservatives are really scared," she said. "Extreme government overreach" during the pandemic had proved that the Democrats aimed, above all, to subjugate citizens. In October, Facebook deleted Gregoire's account, which contained posts about a militia that she belonged to at the time. She told me, "If the left gets their way, they will silence whoever they want." She then expressed another prevalent apprehension on the right: that Democrats intend to disarm Americans, in order to render them defenseless against autocracy. "That terrifies me," Gregoire said. "In other countries, they've said, 'That will never happen here,' and before you know it their guns are confiscated and they're living under communism."

The sense of embattlement that Trump and other Republican politicians encouraged throughout the pandemic primed many conservatives to assume Democratic foul play even before voting began. Last month, at a State Senate hearing on the count at the T.C.F. Center, a witness, offering no evidence of fraud, demanded to see evidence that none had occurred. "We believe," he testified. "Prove us wrong." The witness was Randy Bishop, a conservative Christian-radio host and a former county G.O.P. chairman, as well as a felon with multiple convictions for fraud. I'd watched Bishop deliver a rousing speech in June at an American Patriot Council rally, which Gregoire and the Null brothers had attended. "Carrying a gun with you at all times and being a member of a militia is also your civic duty," Bishop had argued. According to the F.B.I., the would-be terrorists whom the Nulls abetted used the rally to meet and further their plans, which included televised executions of Democratic lawmakers. When I was under the bleachers at the U.S. Capitol, while the mob pushed up the steps, I noticed Jason Howland, a founder of the American Patriot Council, a few feet behind me in the scrum, leaning all his weight into the mass of bodies.

Even if it were possible to prove that the election was not stolen, it seems doubtful whether conservatives who already feel under attack could be convinced. When Gregoire cited the man with the van smuggling a case of ballots into the T.C.F. Center, I told her that he was a journalist and that the case contained equipment. Gregoire shook her head. "No," she said. "Those were ballots. It's not a conspiracy when it's documented and recorded."

Conspiracy theories have always helped rationalize white grievance, and people who exploit white grievance for political or financial gain often purvey conspiracy theories. Roger Stone became Trump's adviser for the 2016 Republican primaries, and frequently appeared on Alex Jones's "InfoWars" show, which warned that the "deep state"—a nefarious shadow authority manipulating U.S. policy for the profit of élites—opposed Trump because he threatened its power. Jones has asserted that the Bush Administration was responsible for 9/11 and that the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre never happened. During the 2016 campaign, Stone arranged for Trump to be a guest on "InfoWars." "I will not let you down," Trump promised Jones.

This compact with the conspiracist right strengthened over the next four years, as the President characterized his impeachment and the special counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russian election meddling as "hoaxes" designed to "overthrow" him. (Stone was convicted of seven felonies related to the Mueller investigation, including making false statements and witness tampering. Trump pardoned him in December. Ten days later, Stone reactivated his Stop the Steal Web site, which began collecting donations for "security" in D.C. on January 6th.) This past year, the scale of the pandemic helped conspiracists broaden the scope of their theories. Many *covid*-19 skeptics believe that lockdowns, mask mandates, vaccines, and contact tracing are laying the groundwork for the New World Order—a genocidal communist dystopia that, Jones says, will look "just like 'The Hunger Games.' " The architects of this apocalypse are such "globalists" as the Clintons, Bill Gates, and George Soros; their instruments are multinational institutions like the European Union, *nato*, and the U.N. Whereas Trump has enfeebled these organizations, Biden intends to reinvigorate them. The claim of a plot to steal the election makes sense to people who see Trump as a warrior against deep-state chicanery. Like all good conspiracy theories, it affirms and elaborates preëxisting ones. Rejecting it can require renouncing an entire world view.

Trump's allegations of vast election fraud have been a boon for professional conspiracists. Not long ago, Jones seemed to be at risk of sliding into obsolescence. Facebook, Twitter, Apple, Spotify, and YouTube had expelled him from their platforms in 2018, after he accused the bereaved parents of children murdered at Sandy Hook of being paid actors, prompting "InfoWars" fans to harass and threaten them. The bans curtailed Jones's reach, but a deluge of *covid*-19 propaganda drew millions of people to his proprietary Web sites. To some Americans, Jones's dire warnings about the deep state and the New World Order looked prophetic, an impression that Trump's claim of a stolen election only bolstered.

After Facebook removed the Stop the Steal group that had posted the video from the T.C.F. Center, its creator, Kylie Jane Kremer, a thirty-year-old activist, conceived the November 14th rally in Washington, D.C., which became known as the Million *maga* March. That day, Jones joined tens of thousands of Trump supporters gathered at Freedom Plaza. Kremer, stepping behind a lectern with a microphone, promised "an incredible lineup" of speakers, after which, she said, everyone would proceed up Pennsylvania Avenue, to the Supreme Court. But, before Kremer could introduce her first guest, Jones had shouted through a bullhorn, "If the globalists think they're gonna keep America under martial law, and they're gonna put that Communist Chinese agent Biden in, they got another thing coming!"

Hundreds of people cheered. Jones, who is all chest and no neck, pumped a fist in the air. "The march starts now!" he soon declared. His usual security detail was supplemented by about a dozen Proud Boys, who formed a protective ring around him. The national chairman of the Proud Boys, Henry (Enrique) Tarrio, walked at his side. Tarrio, the chief of staff of Latinos for Trump, is the son of Cuban immigrants who fled Fidel Castro's revolution. Although he served time in federal prison for rebranding and relabelling stolen medical devices, he often cites his family history to portray himself and the Proud Boys in a noble light. At an event in Miami in 2019, he stood behind Trump, wearing a T-shirt that said "*roger stone did nothing wrong*!"

"Down with the deep state!" Jones yelled through his bullhorn. "The answer to their '1984' tyranny is 1776!" As he and Tarrio continued along Pennsylvania Avenue, more and more people abandoned Kremer's event to follow them. As we climbed toward the U.S. Capitol, I turned and peered down at a procession of Trump supporters stretching back for more than a mile. Flags waved like the sails of a bottlenecked armada. From this vantage, the Million *maga* March appeared to have been led by the Proud Boys and Jones. On the steps of the Supreme Court, he cried, "This is the beginning of the end of their New World Order!"

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Invocations of the New World Order often raise the age-old spectre of Jewish cabals, and the Stop the Steal movement has been rife with anti-Semitism. At the protest that I attended on November 7th in Pennsylvania, a speaker elicited applause with the exhortation "Do not become a cog in the *zog*!" The acronym stands for "Zionist-occupied government." Among the Trump supporters was an elderly woman who gripped a walker with her left hand and a homemade "Stop the Steal" sign with her right. The first letters of "Stop" and "Steal" were stylized to resemble Nazi S.S. bolts. In videos of the shooting inside the Capitol on January 6th, amid the mob attempting to reach members of Congress, a man—subsequently identified as Robert Keith Packer—can be seen in a sweatshirt emblazoned with the words "Camp Auschwitz." (Packer has been arrested.)

On my way back down Pennsylvania Avenue on November 14th, after Jones's speech, I fell in with a group of groypers chanting "Christian nation!" and "Emperor Trump!" I followed the young men to Freedom Plaza, where one of them read aloud an impassioned screed about

"globalist scum" and the need to "strike down this foreign invasion." When he finished, I noticed that two groypers standing near me were laughing. The response felt incongruous, until I recognized it as the juvenile thrill of transgression. One of them, his voice high with excitement, marvelled, "He just gave a fascist speech!"

A few days later, Nicholas Fuentes appeared on an "InfoWars" panel with Alex Jones and other right-wing conspiracists. During the discussion, Fuentes warned of the "Great Replacement." This is the contention that Europe and the United States are under siege from nonwhites and non-Christians, and that these groups are incompatible with Western culture, identity, and prosperity. Many white supremacists maintain that the ultimate outcome of the Great Replacement will be "white genocide." (In Charlottesville, neo-Nazis chanted, "Jews will not replace us!"; the perpetrators of the New Zealand mosque massacre and the El Paso Walmart massacre both cited the Great Replacement in their manifestos.) "What people have to begin to realize is that if we lose this battle, and if this transition is allowed to take place, that's it," Fuentes said. "That's the end."

"Submitting now will destroy you forever," Jones agreed.

Because Fuentes and Jones characterize Democrats as an existential menace—Jones because they want to incrementally enslave humanity, Fuentes because they want to make whites a demographic minority—their fight transcends partisan politics. The same is true for the many evangelicals who have exalted Trump as a Messianic figure divinely empowered to deliver the country from satanic influences. Right-wing Catholics, for their part, have mobilized around the "church militant" movement—fostered by Stephen Bannon, Trump's former chief strategist—which puts Trump at the forefront of a worldwide clash between Western civilization and Islamic "barbarity." Crusader flags and patches were widespread at the Capitol insurrection.

Members of Trump's base went to observe the tabulation of the vote in battleground states, and believed him when he attributed his decisive defeat to "rigged" machines and "massive voter fraud."Photograph by Balazs Gardi for The New Yorker

In the Senate chamber on January 6th, Jacob Chansley took off his horns and led a group prayer through a megaphone, from behind the Vice-President's desk. The insurrectionists bowed their heads while Chansley thanked the "heavenly Father" for allowing them to enter the Capitol and "send a message" to the "tyrants, the communists, and the globalists." Joshua Black, the Alabaman who had been shot in the face with a rubber bullet, said in his YouTube confession, "I praised the name of Jesus on the Senate floor. That was my goal. I think that was God's goal."

While the religiously charged demonization of globalists dovetails with QAnon, religious maximalism has also gone mainstream. Under Trump, Republicans throughout the country have consistently situated American politics in the context of an eternal, cosmic struggle

between good and evil. In doing so, they have rendered constitutional principles of representation, pluralism, and the separation of powers less inviolable, given the magnitude of what is at stake.

Trump played to this sensibility on June 1st, a week after George Floyd was killed. Police officers used rubber bullets, batons, tear gas, and pepper-ball grenades to violently disperse peaceful protesters in Lafayette Square so that he could walk unmolested from the White House to a church and pose for a photograph while holding a Bible. Liberals were appalled. For many of the President's supporters, however, the image was symbolically resonant. Lafayette Square was subsequently enclosed behind a tall metal fence, which racial-justice protesters decorated with posters, converting it into a makeshift memorial to victims of police violence. On the morning of the November 14th rally, thousands of Trump supporters passed the fence on their way to Freedom Plaza. Some of them stopped to rip down posters, and by nine o'clock cardboard littered the sidewalk.

"White folks feel real emboldened these days," Toni Sanders, a local activist, told me. Sanders had been at the square on June 1st, with her wife and her nine-year-old stepson. "He was tear-gassed," she said. "He's traumatized." She had returned there the day of the march to prevent people from defacing the fence, and had already been in several confrontations. While we spoke, people carrying religious signs approached. They were affiliates of Patriot Prayer, a conservative Christian movement, based in Vancouver, Washington, whose rallies have often attracted white supremacists. Kyle Chapman, a prominent Patriot Prayer figure from California (and a felon), once headed the Fraternal Order of Alt-Knights, a "tactical defense arm" of the Proud Boys. A few days before the march, Chapman had posted a statement on social media proposing that the Proud Boys change their name to the Proud Goys, purge all "undesirables," and "boldly address the issues of White Genocide" and "the right for White men and women to have their own countries where White interests are written into law."

The founder of Patriot Prayer, Joey Gibson, has praised Chapman as "a true patriot" and "an icon." (He also publicly disavows racism and anti-Semitism.) In December, Gibson led the group that broke into the Oregon state capitol. "Look at them," Sanders said as Gibson passed us, yelling about Biden being a communist. "Full of hate, and proud of it." She shook her head. "If God were here, He would smite these motherfuckers."

Since January 6th, some Republican politicians have distanced themselves from Trump. A few, such as Romney, have denounced him. But the Republican Party's cynical embrace of Trump's attempted power grab all the way up to January 6th has strengthened its radical flank while sidelining moderates. Seventeen Republican-led states and a hundred and six Republican members of Congress—well over half—signed on to the Texas suit asking the Supreme Court to disenfranchise more than twenty million voters. Republican officials shared microphones with white nationalists and conspiracists at every Stop the Steal event I attended. At the Million *maga* March, Louie Gohmert, a congressman from Texas, spoke shortly after Alex Jones on the steps of the Supreme Court. "This is a multidimensional war

that the U.S. intelligence people have used on other governments," Gohmert said—words that might have come from Jones's mouth. "You not only steal the vote but you use the media to convince people that they're not really seeing what they're seeing."

"We see!" a woman in the crowd cried.

In late December, Gohmert and other Republican legislators filed a lawsuit asking the courts to affirm Vice-President Pence's right to unilaterally determine the results of the election. When federal judges dismissed the case, Gohmert declared on TV that the ruling had left patriots with only one form of recourse: "You gotta go to the streets and be as violent as Antifa and B.L.M."

Gohmert is a mainstay of the Tea Party insurgency that facilitated Trump's political rise. Both that movement and Trumpism are preoccupied as much with heretical conservatives as they are with liberals. At an October rally, Trump derided *rinos*—Republicans in name only—as "the lowest form of human life." After the election, any Republican who accepted Biden's victory was similarly maligned. When Chris Krebs, a Trump appointee in charge of national cybersecurity, deemed the election "the most secure in American history," the President fired him. Joe diGenova, Trump's attorney, then said that Krebs "should be drawn and quartered—taken out at dawn and shot."

There was an unmistakable subtext as the mob inside the Capitol, almost entirely white, shouted, "Whose house? Our house!"Photograph by Balazs Gardi for The New Yorker

As Republican officials scrambled to prove their fealty to the President, some joined Gohmert in invoking the possibility of violent rebellion. In December, the Arizona Republican Party reposted a tweet from Ali Alexander, a chief organizer of the Stop the Steal movement, that stated, "I am willing to give my life for this fight." The Twitter account of the Republican National Committee appended the following comment to the retweet: "He is. Are you?"

Alexander is a convicted felon, having pleaded guilty to property theft in 2007 and credit-card abuse in 2008. In November, he appeared on the "InfoWars" panel with Jones and Fuentes, during which he alluded to the belief that the New World Order would forcibly implant people with digital-tracking microchips. "I'm just not going to go into that world," Alexander said. He also expressed jubilant surprise at how successful he, Jones, and Fuentes had been in recruiting mainstream Republicans to their cause: "We are the crazy ones, rushing the gates. But we are winning!"

Jones, Fuentes, and Alexander were not seen rushing the gates when lives were lost at the Capitol on January 6th. Nor, for that matter, was Gohmert. Ashli Babbitt, the woman who was fatally shot, was an Air Force veteran who appears to have been indoctrinated in conspiracy theories about the election. She was killed by an officer protecting members of Congress—perhaps Gohmert among them. In her final tweet, on January 5th, Babbitt declared, "The storm is here"—a reference to a QAnon prophecy that Trump would expose and execute all his enemies. The same day that Babbitt wrote this, Alexander led crowds at

Freedom Plaza in chants of "Victory or death!" During the sacking of the Capitol, he recorded a video from a rooftop, with the building in the distance behind him. "I do not denounce this," he said.

Trump was lying when, after dispatching his followers to the Capitol, he assured them, "I'll be with you." But, in a sense, he was there—as were Jones, Fuentes, and Alexander. Their messaging was ubiquitous: on signs, clothes, patches, and flags, and in the way that the insurrectionists articulated what they were doing. At one point, I watched a man with a long beard and a Pittsburgh Pirates hat facing off against several policemen on the main floor of the Capitol. "I will not let this country be taken over by globalist communist scum!" he yelled, hoarse and shaking. "They want us all to be slaves! Everybody's seen the documentation—it's out in the open!" He could not comprehend why the officers would want to interfere in such a virtuous uprising. "You *know* what's right," he told them. Then he gestured vaguely at the rest of the rampaging mob. "Just like these people know what's right."

After Chansley, the Q Shaman, left his note on the dais, a new group entered the Senate chamber. Milling around was a man in a black-and-yellow plaid shirt, with a bandanna over his face. Ahead of January 6th, Tarrio, the Proud Boys chairman, had released a statement announcing that his men would "turn out in record numbers" for the event—but would be "incognito." The man in the plaid shirt was the first Proud Boy I had seen openly wearing the organization's signature colors. At several points, however, I heard grunts of "Uhuru!," a Proud Boys battle cry, and a group attacking a police line outside the Capitol had sung "Proud of Your Boy"—from the Broadway version of "Aladdin"—for which the organization is sardonically named. One member of the group had flashed the "O.K." sign and shouted, "Fuck George Floyd! Fuck Breonna Taylor! Fuck them all!" He seemed overcome with emotion, as if at last giving expression to a sentiment that he had long suppressed.

On January 4th, Tarrio had been arrested soon after his arrival at Dulles International Airport, for a destruction-of-property charge related to the December 12th event, where he'd set fire to a Black Lives Matter banner stolen from a historic Black church. (In an intersection outside Harry's Pub, he had stood over the flames while Proud Boys chanted, "Fuck you, faggots!") He was released shortly after his arrest but was barred from remaining in D.C. On the eve of the siege, followers of the official Proud Boys account on Parler were incensed. "Every cop involved should be executed immediately," one user commented. "Time to resist and revolt!" another added. A third wrote, "Fuck these DC Police. Fuck those cock suckers up. Beat them down. You dont get to return to your families."

Since George Floyd's death, demands from leftists to curb police violence have inspired a Back the Blue movement among Republicans, and most right-wing outfits present themselves as ardently pro-law enforcement. This alliance is conditional, however, and tends to collapse whenever laws intrude on conservative values and priorities. In Michigan, I saw anti-lockdown protesters ridicule officers enforcing *covid*-19 restrictions as "Gestapo" and "filthy rats." When police cordoned off Black Lives Matter Plaza, Proud Boys called them "communists," "cunts," and "pieces of shit." At the Capitol on January 6th, the interactions

between Trump supporters and law enforcement vacillated from homicidal belligerence to borderline camaraderie—a schizophrenic dynamic that compounded the dark unreality of the situation. When a phalanx of officers at last marched into the Senate chamber, no arrests were made, and everyone was permitted to leave without questioning. As we passed through the central doors, a sergeant with a shaved head said, "Appreciate you being peaceful." His uniform was half untucked and missing buttons, and his necktie was ripped and crooked. Beside him, another officer, who had been sprayed with a fire extinguisher, looked as if a sack of flour had been emptied on him.

A policeman loitering in the lobby escorted us down a nearby set of stairs, where we overtook an elderly woman carrying a "*trump*" tote bag. "We scared them off—that's what we did, we scared the bastards," she said, to no one in particular.

The man in front of me had a salt-and-pepper beard and a baseball cap with a "We the People" patch on the back. I had watched him collect papers from various desks in the Senate chamber and put them in a glossy blue folder. As police directed us to an exit, he walked out with the folder in his hand.

The afternoon was cold and blustery. Thousands of people still surrounded the building. On the north end of the Capitol, a renewed offensive was being mounted, on another entrance guarded by police. The rioters here were far more bitter and combative, for a simple reason: they were outside, and they wanted inside. They repeatedly charged the police and were repulsed with opaque clouds of tear gas and pepper spray.

"Fuck the blue!" people chanted.

"We have guns, too, motherfuckers!" one man yelled. "With a lot bigger rounds!" Another man, wearing a do-rag that said "*fuck your feelings*," told his friend, "If we have to tool up, it's gonna be over. It's gonna come to that. Next week, Trump's gonna say, 'Come to D.C.' And we're coming heavy."

Later, I listened to a woman talking on her cell phone. "We need to come back with guns," she said. "One time with guns, and then we'll never have to do this again."

Although the only shot fired on January 6th was the one that killed Ashli Babbitt, two suspected explosive devices were found near the Capitol, and a seventy-year-old Alabama man was arrested for possessing multiple loaded weapons, ammunition, and eleven Molotov cocktails. As the sun fell, clashes with law enforcement at times descended into vicious hand-to-hand brawling. During the day, more than fifty officers were injured and fifteen hospitalized. I saw several Trump supporters beat policemen with blunt instruments. Videos show an officer being dragged down stairs by his helmet and clobbered with a pole attached to an American flag. In another, a mob crushes a young policeman in a door as he screams in

agony. One officer, Brian Sicknick, a forty-two-year-old, died after being struck in the head with a fire extinguisher. Several days after the siege, Howard Liebengood, a fifty-one-year-old officer assigned to protect the Senate, committed suicide.

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Right-wing extremists justify such inconsistency by assigning the epithet "oath-breaker" to anyone in uniform who executes his duties in a manner they dislike. It is not difficult to imagine how, once Trump is no longer President, his most fanatical supporters could apply this caveat to all levels of government, including local law enforcement. At the rally on December 12th, Nicholas Fuentes underscored the irreconcilability of a radical-right ethos and pro-police, pro-military patriotism: "When they go door to door mandating vaccines, when they go door to door taking your firearms, when they go door to door taking your children, who do you think it will be that's going to do that? It's going to be the police and the military."

During Trump's speech on January 6th, he said, "The media is the biggest problem we have." He went on, "It's become the enemy of the people. . . . We gotta get them straightened out." Several journalists were attacked during the siege. Men assaulted a *Times* photographer inside the Capitol, near the rotunda, as she screamed for help. After National Guard soldiers and federal agents finally arrived and expelled the Trump supporters, some members of the mob shifted their attention to television crews in a park on the east side of the building. Earlier, a man had accosted an Israeli journalist in the middle of a live broadcast, calling him a "lying Israeli" and telling him, "You are cattle today." Now the Trump supporters surrounded teams from the Associated Press and other outlets, chasing off the reporters and smashing their equipment with bats and sticks.

There was a ritualistic atmosphere as the crowd stood in a circle around the piled-up cameras, lights, and tripods. "This is the old media," a man said, through a megaphone. "This is what it looks like. Turn off Fox, turn off CNN."

Outside the Capitol, rioters surrounded news crews, chasing off the reporters and smashing their equipment with bats.Photograph by Balazs Gardi for The New Yorker

Another man, in a black leather jacket and wraparound sunglasses, suggested that journalists should be killed: "Start makin' a list! Put all those names down, and we start huntin' them down, one by one!"

"Traitors to the guillotine!"

"They won't be able to walk down the streets!"

The radicalization of the Republican Party has altered the world of conservative media, which is, in turn, accelerating that radicalization. On November 7th, Fox News, which has often seemed to function as a civilian branch of the Trump Administration, called the race for

Biden, along with every other major network. Furious, Trump encouraged his supporters to instead watch Newsmax, whose ratings skyrocketed as a result. Newsmax hosts have dismissed *covid*-19 as a "scamdemic" and have speculated that Republican politicians were being infected with the virus as a form of "sabotage." The Newsmax headliner Michelle Malkin has praised Fuentes as one of the "New Right leaders" and the groypers as "patriotic."

At the December 12th rally, I ran into the Pennsylvania Three Percent member whom I'd met in Harrisburg on November 7th. Then he had been a Fox News devotee, but since Election Day he'd discovered Newsmax. "I'd had no idea what it even was," he told me. "Now the only thing that anyone I know watches anymore is Newsmax. They ask the hard questions."

It seems unlikely that what happened on January 6th will turn anyone who inhabits such an ecosystem against Trump. On the contrary, there are already indications that the mayhem at the Capitol will further isolate and galvanize many right-wingers. The morning after the siege, an alternative narrative, pushed by Jones and other conspiracists, went viral on Parler: the assault on the Capitol had actually been instigated by Antifa agitators impersonating Trump supporters. Mo Brooks, an Alabama congressman who led the House effort to contest the certification of the Electoral College votes, tweeted, "Evidence growing that fascist ANTIFA orchestrated Capitol attack with clever mob control tactics." (Brooks had warmed up the crowd for Trump on January 6th, with a speech whose bellicosity far surpassed the President's. "Today is the day American patriots start takin' down names and kickin' ass!" he'd hollered.) Most of the "evidence" of Antifa involvement seems to be photographs of rioters clad in black. Never mind that, in early January, Tarrio, the Proud Boys chairman, wrote on Parler, "We might dress in all BLACK for the occasion." Or that his colleague Joe Biggs, addressing antifascist activists, added, "We are going to smell like you, move like you, and look like you."

Not long after the Brooks tweet, I got a call from a woman I'd met at previous Stop the Steal rallies. She had been unable to come to D.C., owing to a recent surgery. She asked if I could tell her what I'd seen, and if the stories about Antifa were accurate. She was upset—she did not believe that "Trump people" could have done what the media were alleging. Before I responded, she put me on speakerphone. I could hear other people in the room. We spoke for a while, and it was plain that they desperately wanted to know the truth. I did my best to convey it to them as I understood it.

Less than an hour after we got off the phone, the woman texted me a screenshot of a CNN broadcast with a news bulletin that read, "*antifa has taken responsiblitly for storming capital hill.*" The image, which had been circulating on social media, was crudely Photoshopped (and poorly spelled). "Thought you might want to see this," she wrote.

In the year 2088, a five-hundred-pound time capsule is scheduled to be exhumed from beneath the stone slabs of Freedom Plaza. Inside an aluminum cylinder, historians will find relics honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.: a Bible, clerical robes, a cassette tape with King's "I Have a Dream" speech, part of which he wrote in a nearby hotel. What will

those historians know about the lasting consequences of the 2020 Presidential election, which culminated with the incumbent candidate inciting his supporters to storm the Capitol and threaten to lynch his adversaries? Will this year's campaign against the democratic process have evolved into a durable insurgency? Something worse?

On January 8th, Trump was permanently banned from Twitter. Five days later, he became the only U.S. President in history to be impeached twice. (During the Capitol siege, the man in the hard hat withdrew from one of the Senate desks a manual, from a year ago, titled "*PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE IN THE IMPEACHMENT TRIAL OF PRESIDENT DONALD JOHN TRUMP.*") Although the President has finally agreed to submit to a peaceful transition of power, he has admitted no responsibility for the deadly riot. "People thought that what I said was totally appropriate," he told reporters on January 12th.

He will not disappear. Neither will the baleful forces that he has conjured and awakened. This is why iconoclasts like Fuentes and Jones have often seemed more exultant than angry since Election Day. For them, the disappointment of Trump's defeat has been eclipsed by the prospect of upheaval that it has brought about. As Fuentes said on the "InfoWars" panel, "This is the best thing that can happen, because it's destroying the legitimacy of the system." Fuentes was at the Capitol riot, though he denies going inside. On his show the next day, he called the siege "the most awe-inspiring and inspirational and incredible thing I have seen in my entire life."

At the heap of wrecked camera gear outside the Capitol, the man in the leather jacket and sunglasses declared to the crowd, "We are at war. . . . Mobilize in your own cities, your own counties. Storm your own capitol buildings. And take down every one of these corrupt motherfuckers." Behind him, lights glowed in the rotunda. The sky darkened. At 8 *p.m.*, Congress reconvened and resumed certifying the election. For six hours, Americans had held democracy hostage in the name of patriotism.

The storm might be here. ♦

The New York Times | https://nyti.ms/3bfshid

Trump Told Crowd 'You Will Never Take Back Our Country With Weakness'

As Congress prepared to certify the victory of his successor, President Trump railed against the election and helped set in motion hours of violence.



By Maggie Haberman

Published Jan. 6, 2021 Updated Jan. 15, 2021

[Here's what you need to know about President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s Inauguration Day.]

Shortly before leaving the White House on Wednesday morning for the Ellipse, where a stage had been set up for him to address supporters, President Trump had a word with Vice President Mike Pence.

Mr. Pence repeated what he had told Mr. Trump a day earlier: that when he went to Capitol Hill in a few hours to oversee the tallying of the electoral votes that would certify Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s victory, he would not have the power to do what the president wanted and overturn the results. Mr. Pence was planning to release a letter soon explaining that.

Mr. Trump listened, and stewed and chastised Mr. Pence as soft. He accused Mr. Pence's chief of staff, Marc Short, of being responsible for Mr. Pence's position, and told his own aides that Mr. Short, who was working at the White House complex before the joint session of Congress began, was "not welcome" there.

Mr. Trump was somber as he got into the presidential motorcade for the short ride over to the Ellipse, where he made clear in his roughly 70-minute speech that he was furious with Mr. Pence and that he wanted the people gathered on the National Mall to go to the Capitol immediately afterward in protest of what he falsely claimed was a stolen election.

With his loyal No. 2 no longer so loyal in his eyes and with Congress poised to spend the day brushing aside the protests he had nurtured about the Electoral College outcome, Mr. Trump urged his supporters to take another step.

"We want to be so respectful of everybody," Mr. Trump said, before describing his political opponents as bad people. "And we are going to have to fight much harder. And Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us, and if he doesn't, that will be a sad day for our country. Because you're sworn to uphold our Constitution."

Calling the outcome of the election "this egregious assault on our democracy," he said his supporters should "walk down to the Capitol."

"We are going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women," he continued, "and we are probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them — because you will never take back our country with weakness."

Mr. Trump did not in fact accompany the supporters he pressed to fight for him; he returned to the White House and berated aides about how the scene had appeared, before attacking Mr. Pence on Twitter for his stand.

Before the president took the stage, his personal lawyer Rudolph W. Giuliani addressed the crowd and called for "trial by combat" against the Democrats to win the election.

ON POLITICS WITH LISA LERER: *A guiding hand through the political news cycle, telling you what you really need to know.*

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Mr. Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., warmed up the audience by warning of challenges to Republican members of Congress who did not back the pro-Trump efforts: "We're coming for you," he said.

In urging his supporters to see the routine act of certifying the election results as an illegal affront against him and against them, Mr. Trump helped set in motion hours of violence and chaos that continued as darkness fell on Wednesday.

"There's no question the president formed the mob," Representative Liz Cheney, Republican from Wyoming, told Fox News. "The president incited the mob. The president addressed the mob. He lit the flame."

People carrying Trump campaign flags — some of them appearing to be armed — swarmed the Capitol complex. They broke into the building and draped a Trump flag over the Capitol balcony, disrupting the process of the vote certification and forcing members of Congress, journalists and other officials to take cover or flee the building. Shots could be heard at one point. Mr. Pence was whisked to a secure location, as were other lawmakers.



The police confronting Trump loyalists outside the Capitol on Wednesday. Jason Andrew for The New York Times

Mr. Trump monitored the scene as it unfolded on television, according to administration officials and people close to the White House. He continued to disparage Mr. Pence and told people that he was glad that the two Republican incumbents in Georgia, David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler, lost their Senate races, saying they had not done enough to defend him.

The president holed up in the Oval Office, speaking with Mark Meadows, the White House chief of staff, who was said to have been rattled by the day, and Pat A. Cipollone, the White House counsel.

Donald Trump Jr. posted a tweet urging supporters to stop the violence. Ivanka Trump, a White House adviser, denounced the violence and corrected an initial tweet in which her reference to "patriots" made her intention unclear. There was silence from the first lady, Melania Trump, and the president's son Eric Trump tweeted about how many people at the rally sang to him for his birthday.

Two of the president's former chiefs of staff criticized the mob. His former counselor, Kellyanne Conway, said on ABC News that the Trump protesters were made up of "extremists." His former communications director Alyssa Farah publicly urged him to condemn the violent protesters.

But the president resisted repeated appeals from advisers, some made directly to him, others to Mr. Meadows and other aides.

Mr. Trump initially rebuffed requests to mobilize the National Guard, according to a person with knowledge of the events. It required intervention from Mr. Cipollone, among other officials, according to the person. About 1,750 National Guard troops from the District of Columbia and Virginia were to deploy Wednesday night, a National Guard spokesman said.

As allies of the president began to go public with their disgust about what was taking place at the Capitol and urged him to speak out, White House aides finally coaxed Mr. Trump into a tweet in which he did not condemn the violence.

Then they convinced him he needed to make a video statement. Opening with another declaration that the election had been "stolen," Mr. Trump told his supporters to "go home," ending with the words "I love you." Facebook removed that video, and Twitter later did as well.

Then he made clear that he viewed the day as an expression of his grievances. "These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long," Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter. "Go home with love & in peace. Remember this day forever!"

Twitter also removed that tweet and said around 7 p.m. that it would lock his account for 12 hours.

As Congress prepared to reconvene Wednesday night, Mr. Trump's ally, Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky, predicted that there would be no further objections from senators to the certification. But Mr. Trump told advisers that he wanted to see the senators keep going with the fight.

Several White House advisers described themselves as alternately disgusted, scared or shocked by what had taken place. And the work of government continued on around Mr. Trump, seemingly without his participation.

The defense secretary and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff conferred with Mr. Pence, not Mr. Trump, about sending support to reel in the riots. The national security adviser, Robert O'Brien, condemned the "mob" and praised Mr. Pence.

Several Democrats, meanwhile, called for Mr. Trump's impeachment. Others — including some Trump administration officials — privately speculated about whether the 25th Amendment would be invoked to remove him from office with just two weeks left in his term.

Trump Targets Michigan in His Ploy to Subvert the Election

nytimes.com/2020/11/19/us/politics/trump-michigan-election.html

November 20, 2020



President Trump on Thursday accelerated his efforts to interfere in the nation's electoral process, taking the extraordinary step of reaching out directly to Republican state legislators from Michigan and inviting them to the White House on Friday for discussions as the state prepares to certify President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. the winner there.

For Mr. Trump and his Republican allies, Michigan has become the prime target in their campaign to subvert the will of voters backing Mr. Biden in the recent election. Mr. Trump called at least one G.O.P. elections official in the Detroit area this week after she voted to certify Mr. Biden's overwhelming victory there, and he is now set to meet with legislators ahead of Michigan's deadline on Monday to certify the results.

The president has also asked aides what Republican officials he could call in other battleground states in his effort to prevent the certification of results that would formalize his loss to Mr. Biden, several advisers said. Trump allies appear to be pursuing a highly dubious legal theory that if the results are not certified, Republican legislatures could intervene and appoint pro-Trump electors in states Mr. Biden won who would support the president when the Electoral College meets on Dec. 14.

The Republican effort to undo the popular vote is all but certain to fail, as even many Trump allies concede, and it has already suffered near-total defeats in courts in multiple states, including losses on Thursday when judges in Georgia and Arizona ruled against the Trump campaign and its allies. The president suffered another electoral blow on Thursday when Georgia announced the completion of a full recount, reaffirming Mr. Biden's victory there.

Mr. Biden, whose transition has been hindered by Mr. Trump's attempt to cling to power, on Thursday delivered his most forceful condemnation yet of the president's refusal to acknowledge his loss, saying Mr. Trump would be remembered as "one of the most irresponsible presidents in American history."

"It sends a horrible message about who we are as a country," Mr. Biden said in remarks in Wilmington, Del., after a discussion about the economy with both Democratic and Republican governors.

"It's hard to fathom how this man thinks," Mr. Biden added. "I'm confident he knows he hasn't won, and is not going to be able to win, and we're going to be sworn in on Jan 20."

Late Thursday, Senator Mitt Romney, Republican of Utah, joined Mr. Biden in criticizing the actions by Mr. Trump, saying in a statement that the president had tried to "subvert the will of the people" and that it was "difficult to imagine a worse, more undemocratic action by a sitting American president."

Election officials and legal experts say there is virtually no scenario in which a Republican-controlled state legislature could legitimately override the results of a properly held vote. And some G.O.P. legislators in battleground states said they would not intervene.

"Under our statutes, we have no part in the process," said Robin Vos, the Republican speaker of the Wisconsin State Assembly.

In Arizona, the Republican speaker of the House, Rusty Bower, sent a letter to his Republican colleagues emphasizing that he had voted for Mr. Trump, but noting that the courts had already debunked some of the president's claims and making clear that lawmakers could not interfere with the will of the voters.

"I wish to respond by simply saying — I took an oath to support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the State of Arizona," he wrote, according to a copy of the email obtained by Yellow Sheet Report, an Arizona political tipsheet.

Mr. Biden won Arizona by about 11,000 votes, the first time a Democratic presidential candidate had carried the state since 1996.

Despite Mr. Trump's increasing brazenness, Republican leaders in Washington and in state capitals have mostly stayed quiet on his latest effort to interfere with the results of the election.

Aides to the Republican governors of Ohio and Maryland did not respond to messages, and a spokeswoman for Gov. Charlie Baker of Massachusetts, among the nation's most anti-Trump elected Republicans, referred to remarks he made on Nov. 10 in which he asserted that Mr. Biden was the rightful winner of the election. (Larry Hogan, Maryland's governor, later said on CNN that the president's interference was "bad for the country and our standing in the world.")

The Trump maneuvering has intensified in part because many states are now poised to certify their election vote totals; crucially, six key states that Mr. Biden won — Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Nevada and Wisconsin — have deadlines between Friday and Dec. 1 to certify his victories.

Facing those deadlines, the president has grown more strident with his false messages about a stolen election in a last-ditch bid to do nothing less than disenfranchise the legally registered votes of entire states and cities.

Mr. Trump's outreach to Republican officials in Michigan represented a remarkable intrusion into state and local politics: a sitting president personally contacting officials who usually play a small and invisible role in a routine process.

The president requested the White House meeting with Mike Shirkey, the State Senate majority leader, and Lee Chatfield, the speaker of the Michigan House, and they will sit down with him on Friday afternoon, according to a person briefed on the arrangements. It is not clear what the president will discuss.

On Tuesday night, Mr. Trump called Monica Palmer, a Republican member of the canvassing board of Wayne County, which includes Detroit. Ms. Palmer was at the center of a fast-moving controversy over the routine certification of votes, when she and the other Republican board member at first declined to certify the county's votes, then changed their minds under pressure from angry voters and officials.

Ms. Palmer told The Washington Post that Mr. Trump — who had celebrated on Twitter after her earlier vote against certification — called her after the meeting, to inquire about her safety. She said he did not pressure her to change her mind yet again.

Roughly 24 hours after that contact by the president, Ms. Palmer and the other Republican board member, William Hartmann, announced late Wednesday that they were reversing their move to certify the results.

The announcement of that decision was sent to reporters by a public relations firm called ProActive Communications. The firm, based in Virginia, has close ties to Mr. Trump and received about $2 million in payments from his campaign during the 2020 election cycle, according to records compiled by the campaign finance website OpenSecrets. The firm declined to answer questions about how it had come to represent Ms. Palmer and Mr. Hartmann.

ProActive later issued a statement explaining Ms. Palmer and Mr. Hartmann's position from Phill Kline, the director of the Amistad Project, a legal initiative with the conservative public interest law firm the Thomas More Society. That firm lists Jenna Ellis, a senior legal adviser to the Trump campaign, as its "special counsel."

In the statement, Mr. Kline said that the decisions by Ms. Palmer and Mr. Hartmann to rescind their votes for certification meant that Wayne County's results remained uncertified.

But Michigan's secretary of state, Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, said he was wrong.

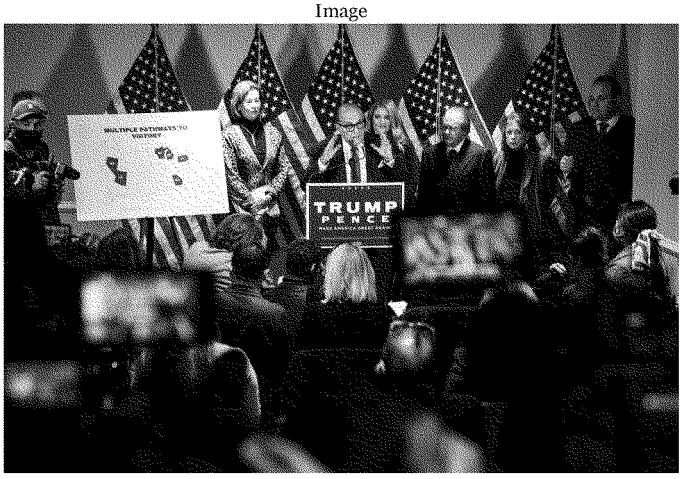
"There is no legal mechanism for them to rescind their vote," Tracy Wimmer, a spokeswoman for Ms. Benson, said on Thursday. "Their job is done and the next step in the process is for the Board of State Canvassers to meet and certify."

At the White House, Mr. Trump has been toggling between appearing to recognize his loss and expressing bitterness and disbelief that what he believed was a victory was being taken from him, aides said. Bolstered by some core supporters, he has hardened in his belief that state legislatures could hold the keys to his political salvation.

The few people who have tried to intervene and tell him that it is time to let Mr. Biden begin a transition have been shut down by Mr. Trump.

The president has been goaded along in particular by his personal lawyer Rudolph W. Giuliani, who has further stoked Mr. Trump's fury, along with his hope of overcoming the reality of Mr. Biden's victory, a half-dozen White House and campaign advisers said.

Image



Rudolph W. Giuliani, Mr. Trump's personal lawyer, speaking to reporters on Thursday. He has promoted several conspiracy theories as he fights the electoral process.Credit...Erin Schaff/The New York Times

The president has become obsessed with a conspiracy theory advanced by one of his lawyers, Sidney Powell, about Dominion Voting Systems machines, aides said, asking one adviser after another about whether there is something to the theory that there was a global effort to hack the election. Cybersecurity officials have said that "there is no evidence" voting systems were compromised.

Though Mr. Trump has discussed reaching out to Republicans in other swing states, so far he has called officials only in Michigan, aides said.

The next step in the election process in Michigan comes on Monday, when the four-member state canvassing board faces a deadline to finalize the certification of the state's vote, after the submission of all 83 county certifications that were completed by Tuesday.

During an interview on Thursday morning, one of the Republican members of the state board of canvassers, Norm Shinkle, said he had not made up his mind as to how he would vote, especially given the questions in Wayne County. He said he was being deluged with calls about his upcoming vote.

At a news briefing on Thursday, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, a Democrat, was asked about what her message to Mr. Trump would be on his election efforts.

"Stop spending energy to mislead about what happened in this election and spend it on a real Covid relief package," she said. "This election was overwhelmingly decided. It was a safe, it was a secure, it was a fair election. Joe Biden won the state of Michigan by over 150,000

votes."

She added: "The canvassers need to do their job. I expect that they will do their job and certify this result."

Image

Monica Palmer, a Republican member of the board of canvassers in Wayne County, Mich., spoke with Jonathan C. Kinloch, one of her Democratic counterparts, in Detroit on Tuesday.Credit...Robin Buckson/Detroit News, via Associated Press

Bob Bauer, a senior adviser to Mr. Biden and a longtime election lawyer, said there was no legal means by which Republicans in Michigan could cast aside a duly held election without violating the voting rights of the state's entire electorate. "They cannot change the outcome after the fact," he said.

Still, he acknowledged, Mr. Trump could try, and it could create "a disgraceful spectacle."

Initially, Trump campaign aides favored a discreet series of challenges and recount requests, people briefed on the discussions said, saying they would have been long shots but would not have been laughed out of a courtroom.

Now, the effort has been taken over by Mr. Giuliani, who has embraced a scattershot strategy and promoted wild conspiracy theories — even in court proceedings, as he did at a hearing in Pennsylvania this week.

On Thursday, Mr. Giuliani appeared in a cramped room at the Republican National Committee headquarters in Washington, where he and his team of lawyers unspooled a meandering thread of conspiracies, alleging a "centralized" plot of widespread fraud with no evidence. (Though Mr. Giuliani said he had evidence, he said that he could not share it to protect personal identities, and that there were other allegations that "at this point, I really can't reveal.")

Ms. Powell, another lawyer for the Trump campaign, followed Mr. Giuliani and furthered the baseless claims, including a lengthy digression that involved Hugo Chávez, the Venezuelan leader who died in 2013.

Senator Joni Ernst, a Republican from Iowa who just won re-election, was sharply critical of Ms. Powell's false allegations that both Republicans and Democrats had been paid to have the system rigged on their behalf.

"To insinuate that Republican and Democratic candidates paid to throw off this election, I think, is absolutely outrageous, and I do take offense to that," Ms. Ernst said on Fox News Radio. "To have that accusation just offhandedly thrown out there just to confuse our voters across the United States, I think that is absolutely wrong."

Reporting was contributed by Kathleen Gray from Detroit, Michael Crowley and Kenneth P. Vogel from Washington, and Trip Gabriel, Stephanie Saul and Rebecca R. Ruiz from New York.

The New York Times https://nyti.ms/3pl4eT9

Trump Weighed Naming Election Conspiracy Theorist as Special Counsel

In a meeting at the White House on Friday, President Trump weighed appointing Sidney Powell, who promoted conspiracy theories about rigged voting machines, to investigate voter fraud.



By Maggie Haberman and Zolan Kanno-Youngs

Published Dec. 19, 2020 Updated Jan. 18, 2021

President Trump on Friday discussed naming Sidney Powell, who as a lawyer for his campaign team unleashed conspiracy theories about a Venezuelan plot to rig voting machines in the United States, to be a special counsel overseeing an investigation of voter fraud, according to two people briefed on the discussion.

It was unclear if Mr. Trump will move ahead with such a plan.

Most of his advisers opposed the idea, two of the people briefed on the discussion said, including Rudolph W. Giuliani, the president's personal lawyer. In recent days Mr. Giuliani has sought to have the Department of Homeland Security join the campaign's efforts to overturn Mr. Trump's loss in the election.

Mr. Giuliani joined the discussion by phone initially, while Ms. Powell was at the White House for a meeting that became raucous and involved people shouting at each other at times, according to one of the people briefed on what took place.

Ms. Powell's client, retired Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn, the former national security adviser whom the president recently pardoned, was also there, two of the people briefed on the meeting said. Some senior administration officials drifted in and out of the meeting.

During an appearance on the conservative Newsmax channel this week, Mr. Flynn pushed for Mr. Trump to impose martial law and deploy the military to "rerun" the election. At one point in the meeting on Friday, Mr. Trump asked about that idea.

Ms. Powell's ideas were shot down by every other Trump adviser present, all of whom repeatedly pointed out that she had yet to back up her claims with proof. At one point, one person briefed on the meeting said, she produced several affidavits, but upon inspection they were all signed by a man she has previously used as an expert witness, whose credentials have been called into question.

The White House counsel, Pat A. Cipollone, and the White House chief of staff, Mark Meadows, repeatedly and aggressively pushed back on the ideas being proposed, which went beyond the special counsel idea, those briefed on the meeting said.

Mr. Cipollone told Mr. Trump there was no constitutional authority for what was being discussed, one of the people briefed on the meeting said. Other advisers from the White House and the Trump campaign delivered the same message throughout the meeting, which stretched on for a long period of time.

Mr. Trump was defeated in the election by President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. by more than 7 million votes. The states have confirmed Mr. Biden's Electoral College victory by a margin of 306-232.

But Mr. Trump, egged on by supporters like Ms. Powell, has never conceded and, holed up inside the White House, he continues to assert that he actually won — even though the baseless claims Ms. Powell and others have made of widespread fraud have been thoroughly debunked and even many of Mr. Trump's closest allies have dismissed as preposterous her tale of an international conspiracy to rig the vote.

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Mr. Trump tends to think of Justice Department appointees when he describes special counsels, but those briefed on the meeting said the idea was for Ms. Powell to serve as a special counsel within the White House, appointed by the president, according to those briefed on it.

Mr. Trump also asked about Ms. Powell being given security clearances to pursue her work, two of the people briefed on the meeting said.

Ms. Powell accused other Trump advisers of being quitters, according to the people briefed.

But the idea that Mr. Trump would try to install Ms. Powell in a position to investigate the outcome sent shock waves through the president's circle. She has repeatedly claimed there was widespread fraud, but several lawsuits she filed related to election fraud have been tossed out of court.

A White House spokesman, Ms. Powell and a spokeswoman for Mr. Giuliani did not respond to requests for comment.

Mr. Trump has been in contact with Ms. Powell at other times in recent days, even though his campaign last month sought to distance itself from her as she aired wild and baseless claims about Dominion Voting Systems machines, which were used in some states, somehow being connected to a Venezuelan plot to control the election.

Dominion officials have demanded that Ms. Powell retract her claims. The Trump campaign on Saturday sent a memo to campaign officials telling them to preserve documents related to Ms. Powell and Dominion in case of legal action by the company against Ms. Powell, according to a report by CNN that a campaign official confirmed.

Since the election, Mr. Trump had pushed the outgoing attorney general, William P. Barr, to appoint a special counsel to look into election fraud, as well as one to investigate Hunter Biden, President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s son. Mr. Barr, people briefed on the matter said, has been unwilling to do what Mr. Trump wanted.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Giuliani have been pushing for data that would provide evidence of widespread election fraud. Mr. Barr has said the Justice Department has found no evidence of fraud on a scale that would change the outcome of the election.

Part of the White House meeting on Friday night was a discussion about an executive order to take control of voting machines to examine them, according to one of the people briefed on the discussion.

Mr. Giuliani has separately pressed the Department of Homeland Security to seize possession of voting machines as part of a push to overturn the results of the election, three people familiar with the discussion said. Mr. Giuliani was told the department does not have the authority to do such a thing.

The conversation between Mr. Giuliani and Kenneth T. Cuccinelli II, the acting deputy secretary of the Homeland Security Department, took place in the past week, according to the people familiar with the discussion, who were granted anonymity because they were not authorized to describe the conversation.

The department oversees the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the agency responsible for safeguarding critical systems, such as elections and hospitals.

Mr. Cuccinelli is said to have told Mr. Giuliani that there is no authority by which the agency, which spent the year working with state election officials to prepare for the election, could assert control over voting machines in those states.

It was unclear whether Mr. Trump facilitated the phone call.

Mr. Giuliani called Mr. Cuccinelli this week to push the department to re-examine the machines to find evidence of what the Trump campaign has called widespread fraud, two of the people briefed on the discussion said.

The effort by Mr. Trump's campaign to use the cybersecurity agency in the push to overturn the results of the election comes after the president last month fired the head of that agency, Christopher C. Krebs. Before he was ousted, Mr. Krebs joined other top election officials in calling the 2020 election "the most secure in American history."

State and local governments take the lead in managing elections in the United States while the cybersecurity agency primarily provides support, guidance and intelligence with the local leaders on potential threats to the voting system.

"We don't own those networks and we do not have independent legal authority to go in and start combing through those networks," said Suzanne Spaulding, an under secretary for cybersecurity and critical infrastructure in the Obama administration. "Efforts that appear to be driving a partisan agenda, particularly completely unfounded allegations, significantly undermine the hard work these men and women have been engaged in for years."

Mr. Cuccinelli, who led the federal government's legal immigration agency before rising to become the second highest ranking official in the Homeland Security Department, emerged as one of the public faces of the department's cybersecurity efforts in the weeks before the election, joining Mr. Krebs in urging patience when it comes to counting the votes.

Michigan representatives denounce attack on U.S. Capitol by pro-Trump mob

mlive.com/politics/2021/01/michigan-representatives-denounce-attack-on-us-capitol-by-pro-trump-mob.html

By Malachi Barrett | mbarret1@mlive.com January 7, 2021



Michigan's representatives in Congress expressed deep disappointment with the state of the country Wednesday while sheltering from violent rioters who breached the U.S. Capitol and disrupted a procedural step in finalizing the presidential election.

Supporters of President Donald Trump rallied in Washington D.C. to protest his loss, culminating in a march on the Capitol where dozens of demonstrators broke into the building and clashed with police. Lawmakers were forced to evacuate offices and the floor of the House and Senate as rioters paraded through the halls of the Capitol.

The National Guard and state and federal police were called in for control, and the mayor of Washington imposed a rare evening curfew. One person was reported to have been shot and killed during the protests.



Rioters scaled the walls of the Capitol Building Wednesday.(AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)

Republicans and Democrats updated constituents on their situation from social media accounts and quick interviews with reporters as the chaos unfolded. Members of Congress called on rioters to go home and exercise their first amendment rights peacefully.

Some representatives called on Trump to take a stronger stance against people sieging the Capitol in his name. Two weeks before President-elect Joe Biden will be inaugurated, Trump still refuses to accept his opponent's victory and encouraged the protesters to march peacefully before the riots unfolded.

Michigan Democrats warned that challenging the country's Electoral College result in an effort to overturn the election would irreparably harm the country during a Wednesday call with reporters. Hours later, they said the incident clearly proves democratic norms are under attack.

Listed below are a collection of statements from Michigan politicians reacting to the situation.

U.S. Rep. Jack Bergman, R-Watersmeet (1st District)

Bergman was among House Republicans who said they would contest the electoral vote in swing states. He issued a statement denouncing rioters but did not indicate whether the attack affected his decision.

"I've said it dozens of times in the past few years - I support every American's right to peacefully protest, but violence and attacks on our police have no place on our streets, or in our Capitol," Bergman said in a statement. "What we are seeing is disgraceful."

"The Capitol Police saved my life on the baseball field just over 3 years ago and they protect our Nation every day. Attacks on any of them, innocent civilians, or any elected official should be met with the full force of the law."



Trump supporters try to break through a police barrier, Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, at the Capitol in Washington. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)AP

U.S. Rep. Bill Huizenga, R-Zeeland (2nd District)

Huizenga was in the House chambers when rioters breached the U.S. Capitol.

After several members of Congress were shot during a charity baseball game in 2017, Huizenga said representatives have had conversations about not standing by during an attack. Huizenga said his colleagues mentally braced themselves to fight off Trump supporters who were breaking into the House floor.

"We were ready, people were grabbing stuff getting ready to defend ourselves," Huizenga said in an interview. "The irony is is that most of the people that were lining up, standing there ready to do that are supporters of the president, ready to try to battle back supporters of the president. That was a sad irony right there."

Huizenga supported a Texas lawsuit seeking to overturn the election result in Michigan and several other swing states. He didn't say the situation changed his opinion on possibly challenging the electoral votes in other states, but said Congress should not be deterred from continuing the process of certifying the vote.

Huizenga said Trump gave a "backhanded endorsement" of rioters who attacked the Capitol.

Related: West Michigan Republicans describe siege of Capitol by pro-Trump 'domestic terrorists'

U.S. Rep. Peter Meijer, R-Grand Rapid (3rd District)

Meijer said Trump should recognize Biden as the winner of the presidential election.

"I share concerns about election integrity, but we have a legal process to deal with disputes," Meijer said in an interview. "What we saw today was a subversion of that legal process, and it was an attempt to overthrow the workings of the U.S. government, the legislative branch. His comments to date have been woefully inadequate. He needs to not just strongly condemn the violence, not just tell people go home, but also recognize and acknowledge Biden as president-elect."

Meijer previously announced he would not challenge the vote of electors in any state. Congress doesn't have authority to disqualify electors, he said, and that hasn't changed.

"Like Hell, if I'm going to be intimidated by a bunch of violent mobs," Meijer said.

Related: Violent protest at Capitol a 'sad day for our Republic,' says West Michigan congressman

U.S. Rep. John Moolenaar, R-Midland (4th District)

"Today's violent and disgraceful demonstrations at the Capitol have no place in our society," Moolenaar said in a statement. "The protesters who breached the Capitol today violated the rule of law and brought violence to a place where we have gathered for centuries to peacefully debate the issues facing our nation."

"This was a direct attack on the free society we are blessed to live in and all those who participated in unlawful activities should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

"I am thankful for the members of law enforcement who are doing everything they can to protect the Capitol and I ask all Americans to pray for peace in our country."



People shelter in the House gallery as protesters try to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)AP

U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Flint (5th District)

Kildee was forced to lay on the ground in the House Chambers as Capitol Police protected representatives from rioters entering the building. The Flint congressman said America was under attack.

Kildee shared a video of rioters clashing with police on social media, and said Republicans are to blame.

"This is today's Republican Party—the party that professes "law and order" and claims to support our men and women in law enforcement. Congress will not be intimidated by mob rule. The 2020 election is over—and we will do our job today to certify the electoral votes."

He also posted the following messages on social media.

"This is a dark moment for the history of our country. Praying for an end to the violence and safety for everyone in the Capitol."

"As soon as this situation is under control and the U.S. Capitol is secure, the House and Senate must reconvene so we can finish our jobs and certify the electoral college results. Angry mobs cannot and will not silence the will of the people."

Related: 'Angry mobs' cannot silence will of the people, Michigan Rep. Dan Kildee says

U.S. Rep. Fred Upton, R-St. Joseph (6th District)

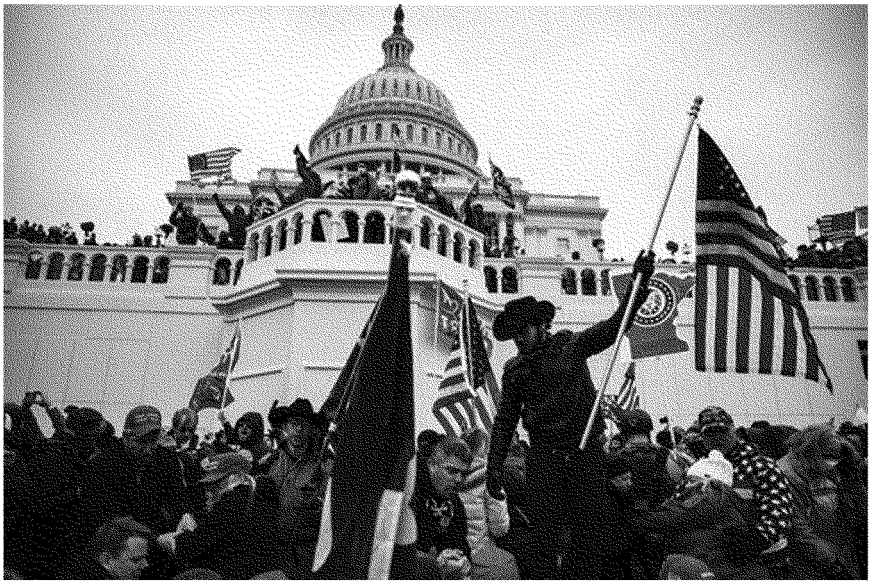
The West Michigan congressman said Trump "clearly inspired" rioters who broke into the Capitol in an attempt to overthrow a procedural step affirming President-elect Joe Biden's victory. Trump addressed protesters gathered in Washington D.C. before the attack, urging them to march peacefully on the Capitol but also indicating "you'll never take back our country with weakness."

"We are the beacon of democracy; we are known for a peaceful transition of power from one administration to the next, and this is going to be Trump's legacy," Upton said in an interview. "It's not going to be the economy. It's going to be how he passed the torch, and it's not going to be good."

Upton appealed to Trump, "for the sake of our nation and safety of our people," to tell his supporters to leave Washington D.C.

"Horrified and shell-shocked by the violence of rioters trying to undo the constitutional transfer of power," Upton said in a statement.

Related: Congressman Upton says attack on Capitol will stain Trump's legacy



*** BESTPIX *** WASHINGTON, DC - JANUARY 06: Pro-Trump supporters storm the U.S. Capitol following a rally with President Donald Trump on January 6, 2021 in Washington, DC. Trump supporters gathered in the nation's capital today to protest the ratification of President-elect Joe Biden's Electoral College victory over President Trump in the 2020 election. (Photo by Samuel Corum/Getty Images) Getty ImagesGetty Images

U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg, R-Tipton (7th District)

Walberg was among House Republicans who said they would contest the electoral vote in swing states. He issued a statement denouncing rioters but did not indicate whether the attack affected his decision.

"Today, the symbolic foundation of our country was attacked by violent and destructive actions," Walberg said in a statement. "I strongly condemn this reprehensible behavior and call for all violence to cease immediately."

"Everyone who illegally breached U.S. Capitol grounds should be held fully accountable for their lawlessness. In a free society, we must debate our differences peacefully and through legal channels, just as was taking place on the floor of the House—never resorting to threats of violence. I am deeply grateful to the men and women of law enforcement who protect the U.S. Capitol and kept us safe from danger."

U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin, D-Holly (8th District)

Slotkin described her experience during an interview with ABC News.

"I was making my way to the capitol when I started to hear the breaking glass and you know, what I think were flashbangs, something that was used for crowd control, you could see the crowds pushing against barricades," Slotkin said. "I did not feel in danger, but that is a very different situation when I see protesters who have not gone through metal detectors running through statuary hall in the rotunda," she said.

Slotkin, a Democrat, said the demonstrations are not representative of the majority of Republicans.

"I think it takes, unfortunately, an egregious act like this for many people to realize that you have to make the call, you have to make a decision on how you want your country to proceed," she said. "And that what we're seeing right now is not what anyone wants for the United States of America."

She also issued a statement condemning the violent protests.

"Violence has absolutely no place in our politics," she said in a statement. "I implore protesters to remain peaceful in exercising their first amendment rights, and I urge my colleagues to recognize where their actions have led us."

U.S. Rep. Andy Levin, D-Bloomfield Township (9th District)

Levin, who was forced to take shelter with colleagues after his office was evacuated, said Trump incited an "insurrection against democracy."

"You cannot encourage people to attack press at your rallies, encourage police to rough up people, encourage violence, disregarding the truth and the rule of law," Levin said. "Most of my Republican colleagues have been going along with this, aiding it and abetting it for four years. When that gets out of hand you don't just get to say 'Oh gee. This is bad. How did this happen? This is the logical result of four years of Trumpism."

In an interview with MLive, Levin said the protesters don't represent a majority of Americans or Republicans. He expressed optimism that the country will weather "a very rough moment" and come together when President-elect Joe Biden is inaugurated on Jan. 20.

"I don't think most people, most Republicans want to see anything like this," Levin said. "I just don't think you can overstate the influence of the President of the United States, in shaping events."

Related: Michigan congressman says Trump provoked 'insurrection' of U.S. government



WASHINGTON, DC - JANUARY 06: Protesters gather on the U.S. Capitol Building on January 06, 2021 in Washington, DC. Pro-Trump protesters entered the U.S. Capitol building after mass demonstrations in the nation's capital during a joint session Congress to ratify President-elect Joe Biden's 306-232 Electoral College win over President Donald Trump. (Photo by Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images) Getty ImagesGetty Images

U.S. Rep. Lisa McClain, R-Bruce Township (10th District)

McClain, who was sworn in Sunday for her first term, said Wednesday was "an atrocious day for democracy" in a statement.

"What started out as Members of Congress following a sacred and Constitutional tradition, quickly was overcome by violent protestors," she said. "I wholeheartedly condemn the violence and vandalism at the Capitol and all who participated in such evil behavior."

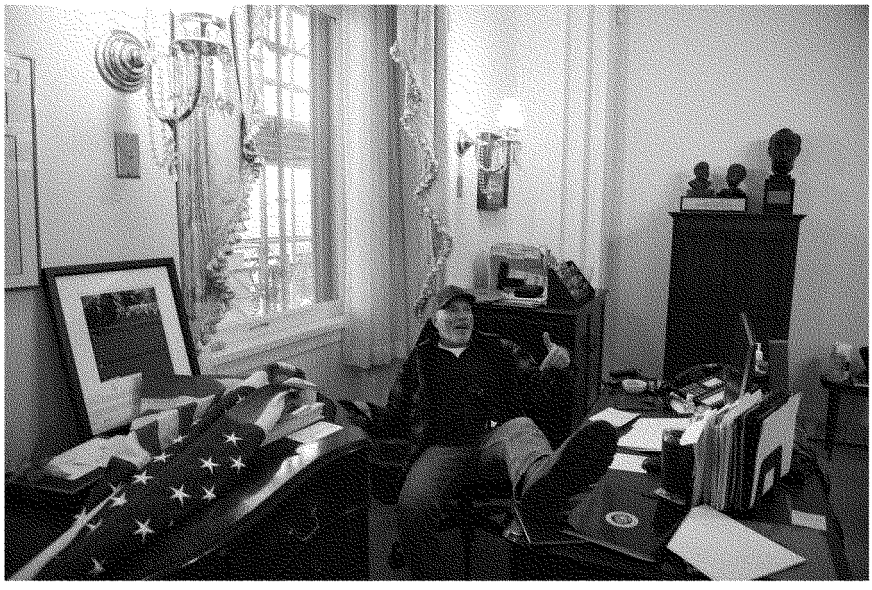
"These vile acts are a slap in the face to peace-loving Americans. As the sun sets in Washington, I truly hope that we awaken tomorrow as a more unified nation that will never again allow such darkness to rear its ugly head. We are all Americans – first and foremost. A sincere thank you to all law enforcement officers, they are the heroes of today. God Bless America."

U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens, D-Rochester Hills (11th District)

Stevens, in a statement issued to MLive, said a violent protest aimed at preventing the certification of the Electoral College vote represents "one of the darkest chapters in our nation's history."

Stevens said a mob of pro-Trump protesters who breached the U.S. Capitol were " emboldened by the president."

"It was nothing short of an attack on our democracy, and it was a result of failed leadership," Stevens said. "So many lives were out in danger today because of the president's words, stoking hatred and violence. This must be a wake-up call. We must find a way to overcome this and unite."



[A supporter of US President Donald Trump sits inside the office of US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi as he protest inside the US Capitol in Washington, DC, January 6, 2021. - Demonstrators breeched security and entered the Capitol as Congress debated the a 2020 presidential election Electoral Vote Certification. (Photo by SAUL LOEB / AFP) (Photo by SAUL LOEB/AFP via Getty Images)AFP via Getty Images

U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Dearborn (12th District)

Dingell said the incident won't deter Congress from doing its duty and certifying the election for Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

"This isn't the America I know," she said in a statement. "Shots have been fired. Bombs have been found. Tear gas has been used in the Capitol. And people, including Capitol Police, have been hurt."

Dingell also called on the president to condemn the violence earlier in the day. Trump "can end this with one tweet," she said in a statement.

Related: 'This needs to end. Now.' Dingell says she's safe amid Washington chaos

U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Detroit (13th District)

Tlaib said responsibility for Wednesday's attack lies with the president.

"This is on Donald Trump, period," she said in a statement. "He called folks to D.C. and gave them marching orders. He needs to be impeached and removed immediately."

She also shared a tweet from fellow Rep. Cori Bush, D-Missouri, calling for the expulsion of Republicans in Congress who "incited this domestic terror attack through their attempts to overturn the election."

Related: Trump 'needs to be impeached and removed immediately,' Rashida Tlaib says

U.S. Rep. Brenda Lawrence, D-Southfield (14th District)

Lawrence issued a statement condemning Trump and his allies "for enabling this dangerous, disgraceful behavior. She said Congress will not be stopped from upholding its constitutional duty.

"We will rise above this, and democracy will win," she said.

During a call with reporters before protesters sieged the Capitol, Lawrence said Trump supporters are trying to overturn the will of voters who elected Biden fairly.

"For me, this suppression tactic is one that I've seen throughout history to suppress the voice and the vote of minorities in America," she said. "It reminds me of Jim Crow. Throwing out legitimate votes of Black Americans? We cannot go down that slippery slope."

Related: Michigan Democrats warn challenging electoral votes could permanently harm democracy

U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, D-Bloomfield Township

Peters issued a short statement confirming his safety and condemning the violence.

"Today's attacks on the Capitol are dangerous, unacceptable and an attack on our democracy —and must stop," he said in a statement.

U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing

Stabenow issued a short statement affirming that Congress will continue to certify electoral votes.

"Despite everything that has happened today, we are returning to the Capitol to complete our work," she said. "Michigan's votes will be counted, and we will affirm the election of Joe Biden as our next President tonight."

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer

Whitmer, a Democrat, and former Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, a Republican, issued a joint statement on Wednesday condemning the violent occupation of the nation's capitol building.

"What is unfolding today in our nation's capital is truly appalling. Violence, vandalism, and insurrection have no place in this great country of ours. We are a nation of laws, not mobs," Whitmer said in a statement.

"While we come from different backgrounds and political parties, Governor Whitmer and I share a deep love for our country," Snyder said in the statement.

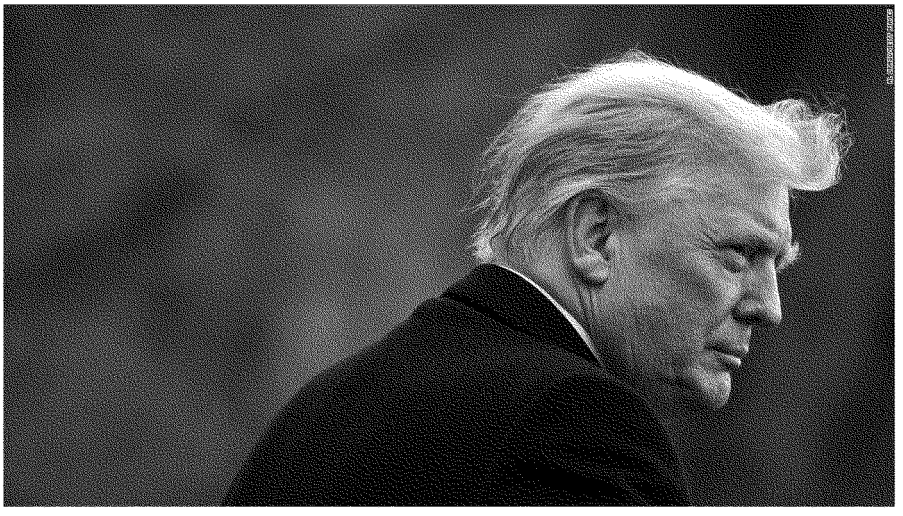
Whitmer in the statement encouraged people to unify "to defeat our real enemy, which is the pandemic that has taken far too many of our friends, neighbors, and loved ones. As Americans, there is no problem we can't solve, and no challenge we can't meet. Let's all stay safe. Let's take care of each other. And let's move forward together, as one United States of America."

Related: Gov. Whitmer, former Gov. Snyder call for national unity amid 'appalling' D.C. violence

House conservatives strategize with Trump and Pence in push to challenge Biden's win

cnn.com/2020/12/21/politics/house-conservatives-trump-meeting/index.html

December 22, 2020



*(CNN)*Alabama GOP Rep. Mo Brooks and fellow House conservatives met privately on Monday with President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence as the lawmakers prepared to mount a long-shot bid in January to overturn the Electoral College results that made Joe Biden the official winner of the election.

The discussion focused on Trump's baseless claims and conspiracies that the election was stolen from him, participants said, and lawmakers emerged confident that there were would be a contingent of House and Senate Republicans who would join the effort and prompt a marathon debate on the floor on January 6 that would spill into January 7.

Pence's involvement in the meeting is significant because he will preside over the joint session of Congress that would count the electoral votes that day. Brooks said that Pence attended "different parts" of the meeting.

"I believe we have multiple senators and the question is not if but how many," Brooks said, something that would defy the wishes of Senate Republican leaders who are eager to move on and urging senators not to participate since doing so could force them to cast a politically toxic vote against Trump.

Brooks told CNN on Monday night that they would seek to challenge the election in at least six battleground states, saying he needs to coordinate "as many as 72" five-minute speeches

that GOP lawmakers would make that day. "That's a significant task," he said.
Read More

Some White House advisers fear Trump's final days

The effort is doomed to fail but would create a spectacle that Senate GOP leaders want to avoid. And if a House member and a senator object to six states' results, it would lead to at least 12 hours of debate, in addition to the time for casting votes on each of the motions, potentially prolonging the fight until the next day.

Senate Majority Whip John Thune of South Dakota, the No. 2 Republican, told CNN the House conservative effort is futile and urged Senate Republicans not to join the effort.

"I think the thing they got to remember is, it's not going anywhere. I mean in the Senate, it would go down like a shot dog. I just don't think it makes a lot of sense to put everybody through this when you know what the ultimate outcome is going to be," he said.

The White House meeting, Brooks said, was to discuss "how bad the voter fraud and election theft" was in November, even though such claims have been rejected by election officials and courts across the country.

Brooks said the meeting was attended by a "double digit" number of lawmakers, but he wouldn't say if senators were part of the meeting. Brooks said the group had a separate meeting with Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani. And the Alabama congressman also said he saw at the White House Sidney Powell, the attorney whose conspiracies about the election have prompted Trump's interest. But, he said, they didn't meet with her.

Trump White House

Other GOP lawmakers have also confirmed their attendance at the meeting, including Arizona Rep. Paul Gosar, who told CNN: "We talked about a lot of things."

Texas Rep. Louie Gohmert, a staunch Trump defender, said this when asked if Trump urged him to object to the election results at the meeting: "He didn't urge anything, he didn't need to, I've been planning on objecting all along."

Rep. Jody Hice, a Georgia Republican who attended the meeting, tweeted: "I will lead an objection to Georgia's electors on Jan 6."

Sources told CNN that other members were there, including Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan, a prominent ally of the President who has been urging him to continue the battle.

While the House conservatives have virtually no chance at succeeding, it would put many Republicans in an awkward spot. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and his top lieutenants have urged senators not to join House conservatives because they would then be forced to cast a vote that would make them choose between Trump and the will of the voters.

But several senators have not ruled out joining the effort, including Sens. Josh Hawley of Missouri and Rand Paul of Kentucky. And Trump has heaped praise on Alabama's incoming senator, Tommy Tuberville, for signaling he'd object to the results.

Another incoming senator, Kansas Rep. Roger Marshall, wouldn't say if he would join House conservatives' effort to contest a state's election results. Marshall was a signatory on the House GOP's amicus brief backing the Texas suit seeking to invalidate votes across several battleground states that the Supreme Court rejected earlier this month.

Trump praises Tuberville after Alabama GOP senator-elect leaves open objecting to election results January 6

"Jan. 6 seems like a long times away yet," Marshall told CNN when asked if he would join the effort.

At the joint session, any member of Congress can object to a state's results. All it takes is one House member and one senator to challenge a state's electors, and the House and Senate are required to stop the joint session to separately deliberate on the matter for two hours and vote on whether to exclude the contested state's results.

"In a general sense, how it looks like we're headed, it looks like we're gonna have valid objections filed to the number of states on January 6," Brooks said. "And we'll probably know sometime on January 7, after all the speeches and votes have taken place, what the Electoral College returns are."

Brooks added no one in House GOP leadership has discouraged him from taking these steps, including House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, who has yet to formally recognize Biden as President-elect, even though McConnell has. On a GOP conference call last week, McCarthy was asked about the January 6 meeting, but he sidestepped the question to focus on the Covid-19 relief talks, participants said.

Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise, the House minority whip, also hasn't acknowledged Biden's victory. And asked by CNN if House members should challenge the election results on Jan. 6, Scalise didn't discourage them from doing so. Instead, he pointed to how objections were lodged during George W. Bush's victories, as well as in 2016 during the Trump presidency. But in those past races, the defeated presidential candidates had already conceded -- while Trump has been actively trying to overturn an election he lost.

"If any Republicans did it, it's clearly not the first time it's been done," Scalise said Monday. "Every Republican president in the last three terms have been objected to by Democrats."

This story has been updated with a quote from Senate Majority Whip John Thune on Monday.

CNN's Ali Main contributed to this report.

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Politics

The four-hour insurrection

How a Trump mob halted American democracy



(Matt McClain/The Washington Post)

March on the Capitol

Supporters of President Trump march after his rally Wednesday to the Capitol.

By **Marc Fisher**, **Meagan Flynn**, **Jessica Contrera** and **Carol D. Leonnig**

Before noon, the president of the United States, their rogue hero, told thousands of his supporters that this was the last stand, the moment to overturn the result of November's election and ensure a second term for Donald Trump.

"We're going to have to fight much harder," Trump told several thousand red-clad, flag-waving acolytes gathered on the Ellipse, with the White House as backdrop.



President Trump speaks to supporters Wednesday, urging them to march on the Capitol. (Matt McClain/The Washington Post)

And then the 45th president of the United States unleashed a mob.

attacked and escaped into secret passageways. Rioters ransacked the office of the House speaker. Flag-waving protesters smashed windows and assaulted police inside the nation's iconic symbol of democracy.

The process of affirming the next president was halted by mob violence.

Time will decide whether Wednesday's assault on the Capitol was a riot, an insurrection, a last gasp of a renegade president or an early skirmish in a civil war organized on far-right social media, but it was already clear that Jan. 6, 2021, would go down in history as one of America's ugliest days.

It began with the president's false promise: "After this, we're going to walk down and I'll be there with you," Trump said. He wasn't going anywhere but back to the White House, where he had 14 days remaining in his term.

"You'll never take back our country with weakness," he told his followers. "You have to show strength, and you have to be strong."

They did as they were told. By the thousands, they walked 16 blocks down Pennsylvania Avenue NW and surrounded the U.S. Capitol.

By the hundreds, they climbed the grand marble staircase and breached police gates and smashed windows and shoved police officers and broke through doorways and forced their way in. They burst into the offices and chambers of the Capitol, taking over the place as though it were their own, lounging in members' offices, strolling through the statuaries, halting the constitutional process of completing Joe Biden's election to the presidency and raising the specter of a coup against this 232-year-old democracy.



Trump had repeatedly urged his followers to come to Washington on Wednesday, when Congress would affirm the result of November's election. (Astrid Riecken/for The Washington Post)



The pro-Trump crowd sought to protest the peaceful transfer of power to the administration of President-elect Joe Biden. (Astrid Riecken/for The Washington Post)

The attack, which some historians called the most severe assault on the Capitol since the British sacked the building in 1814, was "instigated at the highest level," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). It was "what this president has caused today, this insurrection," said Sen. Mitt Romney (R-Utah), his party's 2012 presidential nominee.

The assault left one woman — a Trump banner draped around her neck — fatally shot inside the Capitol, and three others dead from medical incidents. It led to at least 52 arrests, four hours of chaos, the evacuation of congressional buildings, the paralysis of the city and the humiliation of a nation that has long considered itself the world's greatest democracy.

Inside the Senate, Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) heard Capitol Police order people away from the doors, and then, suddenly, out of the chamber — now. Some people ran, scrambling to a single exit that police had opened. It led to a staircase, which led to an undisclosed evacuation area.

"There was obviously a great deal of anxiety and concern," Cardin said. "It was like we might be in harm's way any second."

The attack and siege seemed like a surprise: CNN kept showing the debate on the Senate floor even as the mob breached the building, only a handful of Capitol Police officers were posted at the building's ceremonial front steps, and as the debate unfolded, not one legislator said anything about the mob outside.



Some Trump supporters climbed trees Wednesday to view the crowd. (Matt McClain/The Washington Post)

But the insurrection was hardly spontaneous. It was carefully, methodically planned, spelled out on far-right social media, where die-hard Trump supporters openly traded advice on how to steer clear of D.C. police officers, how to pry open the doors of the Capitol and how to get illegal guns into the city.

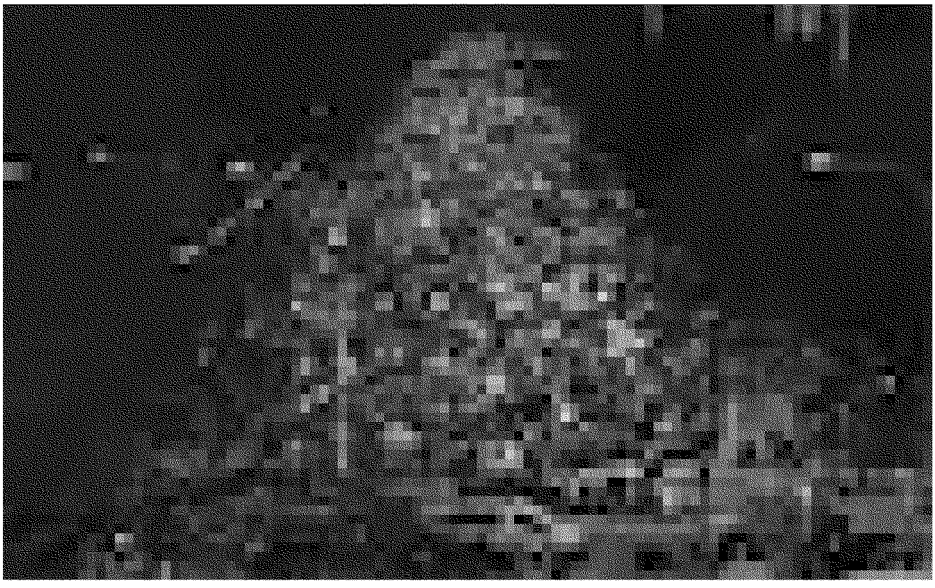
In forums devoted to the QAnon conspiracy theory movement and among hard-right groups such as the Proud Boys, plans to turn a pro-Trump rally into a full-on capture of the Capitol had been plotted, dissected and disseminated for months.

The ultimate inspiration of the mob's passion, the president himself, had repeatedly urged his followers to come to Washington on the day when Congress would affirm the result of November's election.

A presidency that began with Trump standing on the Capitol steps and declaring that "this American carnage stops right here and stops right now" was now ending in anarchy, with an unchecked mob bringing one of the country's most sacred ceremonies — and the peaceful transfer of power — to a screeching, scary halt.

The unprecedented interruption of what is ordinarily a moment of pomp and peace sent shock waves throughout the world. D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) ordered a 6 p.m. curfew. The region's transit system shut down. Shops closed, streets emptied.

"America is so much better than what we're seeing today," Biden tweeted, but in the nation's capital city, the end of that sentence seemed very much to demand a question mark.



Trump supporters walk along Constitution Avenue toward the Capitol after the president spoke. (Michael S. Williamson/The Washington Post)

Protest

Their president told them to move to the Capitol and so they did, converging on the East Front steps after 1 p.m., shouting, chanting, singing the national anthem, waving Confederate flags and Trump 2020 banners.

Some spoke of civil war. Some shouted out the Pledge of Allegiance. Some shouted the pledge even as they rushed the police line meant to keep unwanted visitors out of the building, which has been closed to the general public for months because of the coronavirus pandemic.

will of the people and grab a second term in office.

Over the course of an hour, waves of protesters arrived in front of the Capitol, just as inside the House and Senate convened in a rare joint session to affirm the electoral college vote and officially decree Biden the next president.



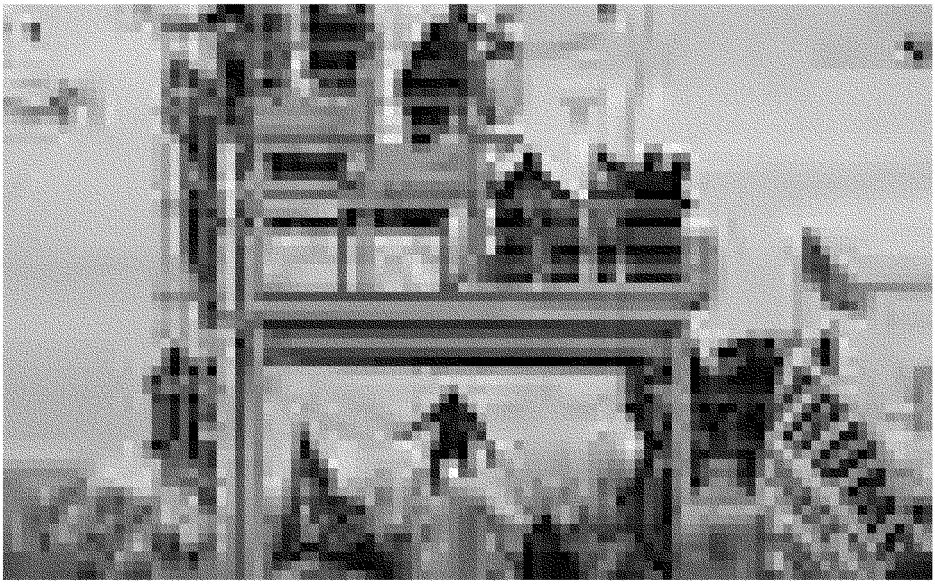
The Capitol Police had been expecting a smaller group than the waves of Trump supporters that arrived. (Ricky Carioti/The Washington Post)

Very quickly, the crowd outnumbered the Capitol Police, who had expected a far smaller gathering, according to law enforcement officials. Police had set up barricades outside the building as a show of police presence, but the protesters simply ignored them — easily knocking them over and hopping over them.

handful of officers, arrayed against a crowd reaching into the hundreds.



Pro-Trump protesters scream at police deployed to protect the Capitol and the city. (Amanda Andrade-Rhoades/for The Washington Post)



Trump supporters took over the stage set up for the Jan. 20 inauguration of Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala D. Harris. (Ricky Carioti/The Washington Post)

There was pushing. Men in Trump regalia shoved police, called them "traitors," cursed at them. At some doors to the building, no officers were visible.

In one big push, Trump supporters surged up the steps and overwhelmed the officers atop the flight of stairs. Hundreds, then thousands followed. Some scaled the walls to get up; others climbed over one another to reach the top.

Inside, after only 12 votes had been certified in the presidential election, both houses of Congress suspended their debates.



Trump backers clash with police, who had not expected the president to send his rally crowd to the Capitol. (Amanda Andrade-Rhoades/for The Washington Post)

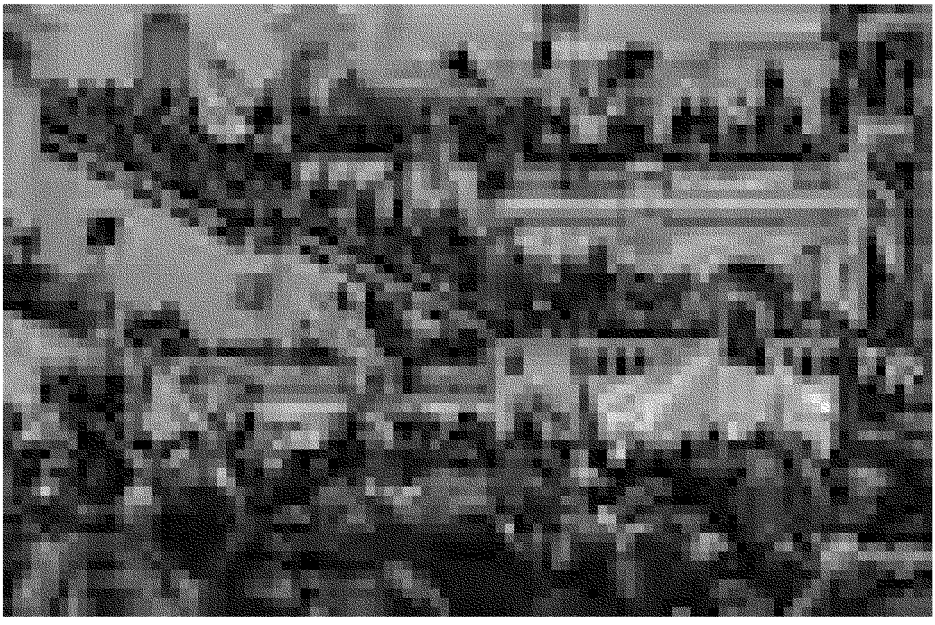
For over an hour, people banged on the doors of the Capitol on the north and west sides, chanting, "Let us in! Let us in!"

"The Capitol Police weren't prepared for so many protesters who were pushing their way in," said one law enforcement official briefed on the incident, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly about the matter. "Not all windows and entrances were protected."

Officials had not anticipated that Trump would dispatch his rally crowd to the Capitol.

"Capitol Police did have a plan, but apparently they assumed business as usual," the official said. "They didn't expect Trump to incite them and that they would

Federal law enforcement officials had decided against any large, visible show of force on city streets, not wanting to repeat the huge assemblage of heavily armed agents that flooded the nation's capital in June to dispel civil unrest over police conduct.



Trump supporters surround the Capitol as lawmakers were inside conducting what is ordinarily a moment of pomp and peace. (Ricky Carioti/The Washington Post)

Riot

After 2:10 p.m., a man in the crowd swung a clear plastic riot shield to break through first-floor windows on the Capitol's south side, making a hole big enough to climb through. A stream of protesters pushed in.

the swelling, chanting mob inside. Police tried to disperse the group with pepper balls and smoke bombs, but more people came in behind those at the front.

A Capitol Police officer shouted from a higher stairway, ordering the intruders to halt. When they didn't comply, the official said, the officer fired his gun at a man who kept coming toward him. The scene was chaotic, with some rushing away from the sound of gunfire. Protesters saw that a woman in their group had fallen.

A medical squad pushed into the building and carried the woman — later identified by her former husband as Ashli Babbitt, an Air Force veteran and avid Trump supporter — out on a gurney.

"White female, shot in the shoulder," an officer said as they hurried away.

Babbitt gazed vacantly to one side, her torso and face covered in blood. As the gurney was loaded into an ambulance, pro-Trump protesters swarmed, screaming "Murderers!" Capitol Police officers with long guns pushed the crowd back, and the ambulance drove off.

Babbitt died from her wounds, police said.



Trump supporters try to force their way into the Capitol. (Amanda Voisard/for The Washington Post)

Protesters, by that point nearly surrounding the building, kept pouring in, breaking through entrances that had been locked but not secured by the Capitol Police.

Inside, officers in riot gear sprayed intruders with chemical irritants and made a few arrests, but outside, crowds climbed up scaffolding, hanging a giant American flag and winning cheers. Pockets of the crowd chanted "four more years" and "USA" as a few people shouted QAnon conspiracy theories through a megaphone.

Police escorted a line of arrested protesters away from the building, and some in the crowd called out to the officers, "Join us!" and " 'We the people' means you, too!"

stopping the rites of democracy.



After 2 p.m. Wednesday, a crowd was able to enter the Capitol. Rioters waved Trump 2020 flags as they stormed the Rotunda. (Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock)

2:24: On Parler and Gab, the far-right-friendly social media sites, Trump followers urged the crowd in Washington to find and accost Vice President Pence, whom Trump had been pressuring to use his ceremonial role Wednesday to help overturn the election results. Within minutes, the chant arose from factions of the mob at the Capitol: "Where is Pence?"

The vice president had been whisked to a secure location in the Capitol complex.

"This is a coup attempt," tweeted Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.).



A pro-Trump rioter carries a Confederate flag in the halls of the Capitol. (Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock)

2:30: The intruders fancied themselves revolutionaries, or something. On the west side of the Capitol, they erected a gallows, complete with a hanging rope. They defied orders to disperse, shoved police officers wielding pepper spray, laughed when they heard that Bowser had ordered a citywide 6 p.m. curfew.

"Guess who's going home? None of us!" someone yelled. "Time to take back what's ours!" someone else screamed. "A new 1776 has just begun!"

One large cluster of people rushed the steps after a handful of protesters called on others to "storm the Capitol!"

"Get these kids out of here!" a woman shouted at families.

Hundreds made it inside, dismantling metal barricades.

"This is amazing," a woman in a star-spangled hoodie said. "They're doing it!"

Inside the Capitol, hundreds broke into an a capella rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner," their voices echoing off the marble walls.



As the Capitol was breached, Vice President Pence was taken to a secure location in the complex. President Trump was at the White House and tweeting. (Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock)

2:38: Just 14 minutes after the president had slammed his vice president, tweeting that "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been

Trump tweeted: "Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement. They are truly on the side of our Country. Stay peaceful!"

Thirty-five minutes later, slightly stronger: "I am asking for everyone at the U.S. Capitol to remain peaceful. No violence! Remember, WE are the Party of Law & Order — respect the Law and our great men and women in Blue."

Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.), unimpressed, tweeted his response: "It's a little late for that. Don't you think?"

Trump stayed inside the White House, seeing only a small group of loyal aides, including Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, social media director Dan Scavino, personnel director John McEntee and policy adviser Stephen Miller.



After pro-Trump rioters broke windows on the doors of the House chamber, security agents stand at the ready behind a makeshift barricade. (Bill O'Leary/The Washington Post)

2:52: "I am in the House Chambers," Rep. Daniel Kildee (D-Mich.) tweeted. "We have been instructed to lie down on the floor and put on our gas masks. Chamber security and Capitol Police have their guns drawn as protesters bang on the front door of the chamber. This is not a protest. This is an attack on America."

Packs of intruders had made their way to both chambers of Congress, and House and Senate members were locked inside, watching their handful of security officers point their service weapons at the doors — the only barrier between the mob and the nation's lawmakers.

"You could hear a pounding on the doors on the outside," said Rep. David Trone (D-Md.). "At that point, they had us get our gas masks out."

Rep. Jamie B. Raskin (D-Md.) listened to the mob ramming up against the doors, and all he could think about was his family. His 25-year-old son died last week, a tragedy that had shaken the House, and Raskin had taken one of his daughters and his son-in-law to the Capitol to watch the debate over presidential electors, "because we wanted to be together," he said.

"I thought I could show them the peaceful transfer of power in the United States of America," Raskin said on C-SPAN. "What was really going through my mind was their safety because they were not with me in the chamber, and I just wanted us all to get back together."



In the House, people were told to grab gas masks as police deployed chemical irritants against the mob. (Andrew Harnik/AP)



Legislators take shelter as rioters try to break into the House chamber. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

House members were informed that police had deployed chemical irritants in Statuary Hall, and Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-Va.), a former CIA case officer, prepared to be exposed to tear gas.

Capitol Police officers barricaded the chamber doors with tables and bookshelves.

"It is a low for this country I never thought we would reach," Spanberger said. "This is what we see in failing countries. This is what leads to a death of democracy."

2:54: Trump's former communications director, Alyssa Farah, tweeted a message to her former boss: "Condemn this now, @realDonaldTrump — you are the only one they will listen to. For our country!"



As the rioters walk through the Capitol, staff members barricade their office doors for protection. (Amanda Voisard/for The Washington Post)

3:00: A cluster of protesters using ropes and makeshift ladders reached the north side of the Capitol, although they might have saved themselves the trouble. Far more people simply walked around the corner and made it right up to the building on foot.

A woman wearing a "What would Jesus do?" sandwich board read from scripture before handing the mic to someone who led a prayer for the police.

On the building's main steps, dozens of protesters, many in Make America Great Again hats, chanted "Fight for Trump." Hardly anyone wore a mask.

A middle-aged couple from Idaho snapped pictures of each other, smiling.

as she did, that the election had somehow been stolen from Trump.

3:15: The president's daughter Ivanka Trump, in the absence of any statement by her father, tweeted a call for the mob to cease all violence. She addressed them as "American Patriots." Minutes later, she took down the tweet.

Schumer and Pelosi called on Trump to demand that the protesters vacate the Capitol grounds. He did not.

3:30: As dozens of military police marched toward the Capitol, wearing gas masks and carrying batons and shields, at least as many screaming protesters trailed them, calling the authorities "oath breakers," "cowards" and "traitors."



3:40: Hours into the insurrection, the police seemed vastly outnumbered. The D.C. Council, the capital city's legislature, announced that the Defense Department had denied the mayor's request to give the D.C. National Guard the authority to restore order at the Capitol.

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam (D) had already called up members of the Virginia National Guard and sent 200 Virginia state troopers to the District at the mayor's request. Around the same time, Pence, responding to Bowser's request, ordered the city's entire National Guard, more than 1,100 strong, activated.

Inside the Capitol, a man who had gotten into Pelosi's office made himself at home. Dressed in jeans, a flannel coat and a baseball cap, he propped his boot up on a desk, rested what appeared to be a weapon against his hip, draped an American flag over a pile of documents and posed for pictures, a satisfied grin sweeping across his face.

When he left, a file folder was placed atop a computer keyboard. In red capital letters, someone had scrawled "WE WILL NOT BACK DOWN."



Congressional staff members had to evacuate quickly as the threat from rioters grew. (Amanda Voisard/for The Washington Post)

4:00: Hundreds of protesters trying to break in through a door on the Capitol's north side ran smack into a fresh line of police. Both sides splashed each other with pepper spray. Officers hit the crowd with batons, and protesters struck back with flagpoles.

The mob outnumbered the police. They overpowered the officers and rushed the building, chanting "Treason" and "Our house." A few minutes later, clouds of tear gas emerged over the crowd, leading many to run from the Capitol.

back and allow the work of democracy to go forward," Biden said.

The president-elect, looking deeply saddened, called the mob "a small number of extremists" whose behavior "borders on sedition."

"The words of a president matter," Biden said. "I call on President Trump to go on national television now to fulfill his oath and defend the Constitution."

The president did no such thing.

Instead, Trump did what he's done for most of his adult life: He doubled down on his provocation.



‘Go home’

“These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long,” Trump tweeted. “Go home with love & in peace. Remember this day forever!”

Twitter quickly removed the tweet.

“Go home, we love you, you’re very special,” Trump said in a short video he tweeted, but after the bulk of his message focused on his insistence that the election had been rigged against him, Twitter removed that presidential emission, too. And then the company locked Trump’s account for 12 hours, effectively silencing the president’s primary mode of communication.



The crowd outside the Capitol cheered the rioters who forced their way inside. (Evelyn Hockstein/for The Washington Post)

4:30: Outside the east side of the Capitol, a man with a megaphone announced to a crowd of hundreds: "Hey, everyone, Donald Trump says he wants everyone to go home."

In response, some in the crowd booed loudly. One man shouted back: "Shut the f--- up! We're not going to bend a knee, motherf-----!"

Around that time, news organizations filled in the last remaining piece of the electoral puzzle, declaring victory for Democrat Jon Ossoff in Tuesday's runoff election in Georgia, giving Democrats a sweep of the state's two U.S. Senate seats and control of the chamber. In ordinary circumstances, this would have been a day of unadulterated triumph for Biden and his party, as they won

But there was nothing ordinary about this day, and any triumph of democracy would have to rise from the ashes of American democracy's darkest moment in decades, perhaps since the removal of a criminal president in 1974 or the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861.



Flash-bangs were thrown by police into the crowd of Trump supporters who stormed the Capitol. (Evelyn Hockstein/for The Washington Post)

4:40: Hundreds of riot police, from the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI and the D.C. police, arrived and made their presence felt. They began to clear the Capitol and its surrounding office buildings.

As the sun set, officers in riot gear threw explosive flash-bangs into the crowd outside the Capitol. Dozens of Capitol, D.C. and National Guard officers —

The fresh troops beat back the mob, which had been banging on the doors and windows of the Capitol for hours. Pushed away, the rioters yelled at the officers, chanting "Traitors! Traitors! Traitors!"

5:00: Police finished clearing the upper level of the Capitol. Officers, some with shields, formed a human barrier to block anyone else from getting inside.

As the intruders emerged, they were greeted as celebrities. One woman who said she had footage on her phone of Capitol Police pointing guns at rioters was encircled by dozens of protesters eager to see her show.

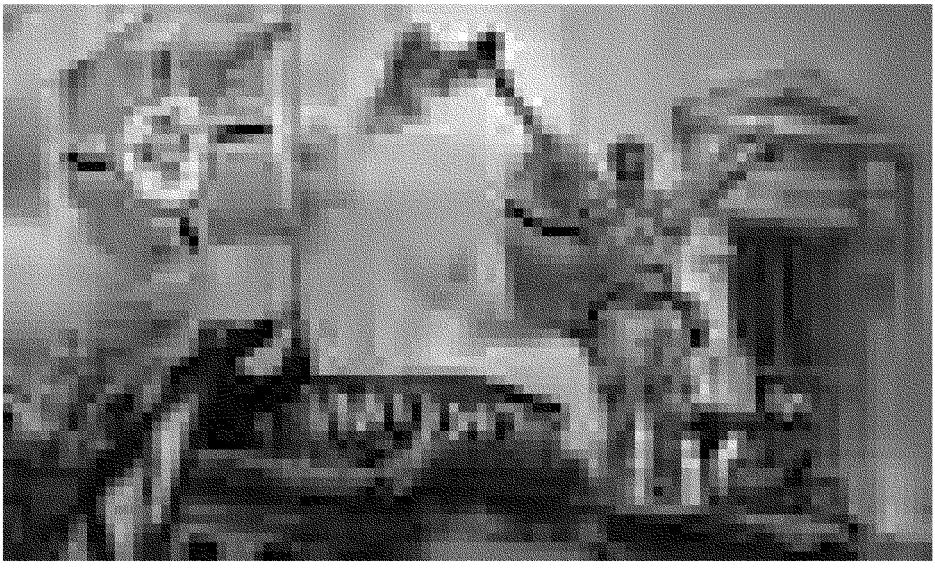
Just away from the building, about a hundred people rushed a media staging area where TV cameras were trained on the Capitol. They knocked over barricades and stomped on camera equipment, sometimes using Trump flags as weapons.

"CNN sucks!" they yelled.

People milled on the Capitol grounds, eating, taking pictures, chatting on the phone. Some were jubilant, reveling in their ability to take over their country's seat of government.

"You're seeing something in America you haven't seen since 1776," one man said.

Others remained angry, defiant. They gave police the finger and cursed at them.



Even after Trump's message asking his supporters to leave the Capitol, they remained. (Evelyn Hockstein/for The Washington Post)

Curfew

At 5:40, the Capitol was declared secure. Pelosi said she and Pence had agreed to resume the electoral college count later in the evening. Some Democrats renewed talk of impeaching Trump — again — with less than two weeks remaining in his term.

The National Association of Manufacturers, which represents 14,000 small and large manufacturers, called the violence "sedition" and asked Pence to "seriously consider working with the Cabinet to invoke the 25th Amendment to preserve democracy." A section of the amendment — never invoked — allows the vice

At 6 p.m., the mayor called the rioters' behavior "shameful, unpatriotic and above all . . . unlawful." She said those who violated the law "will be held accountable. There will be law and order."

At 6:15, police at the Capitol announced: "A curfew is now in effect. All individuals must leave the U.S. Capitol grounds."



A protester who was pepper-sprayed is helped by members of the crowd. (Michael Robinson Chavez/The Washington Post)

Hundreds of protesters slowly walked away as police in riot gear marched behind them.

As members of Congress prepared to return and resume the count of the electoral college votes, hundreds of police officers surrounded the building. Some removed Trump flags that had been left behind.

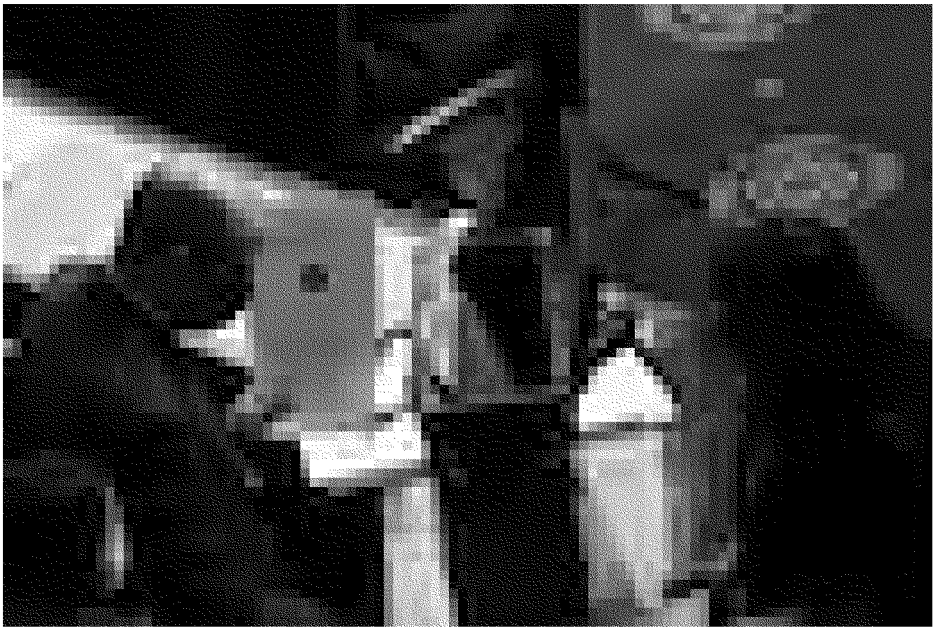
The police presence now was enormous, imposing — and too late, said Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio). "There was a strategic breakdown, for sure," he said, "and you can bet your a-- we are going to get to the bottom of it."

By 8:45, the officers who had formed a human shield on the Capitol's east steps had dispersed. A cluster of officers headed off together, saying good night, joking about how badly they needed the bathroom.

Inside the building, members of Congress resumed their vote count, pausing now and again, deep into the night, to debate disproved claims of election fraud. After the attack, some Republicans backed away from their objections to accepting the election, but more than 100 House Republicans maintained their absolute allegiance to Trump, rejecting overwhelming evidence that the vote was fairly conducted and accurately counted.



Aides carry boxes containing electoral college votes Wednesday at the Capitol. (Oliver Contreras/for The Washington Post)



At 3:41 Thursday morning, police finally declared Biden the 46th president of the United States.

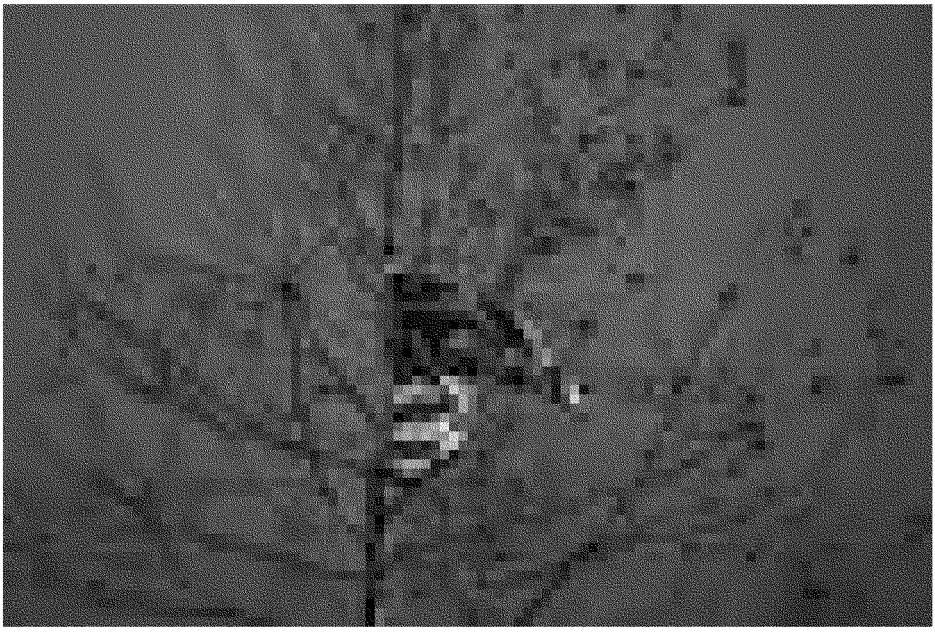
Trump, temporarily barred from Twitter, put out word through Scavino that, "Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will be an orderly transition on January 20th."

As dawn broke Thursday, a handful of joggers and dog walkers passed by the Capitol as National Guard troops and police milled about. Barricades had been reopened. On the ground, the mob had left its mark, including a pile of empty beer bottles and a discarded book titled "The Great Controversy: Will Two Former Rivals Unite?"

Four years ago, in his inaugural address, Trump declared, "The time for empty talk is over. Now arrives the hour of action."

Trump's hour on the national stage is finally ending, indeed with action, with violence against the very structure and core of the nation he was entrusted to protect, violence fomented and encouraged by the president of the United States.

the first full day of President Joe Biden's turn at the helm of a hurting land.



Wednesday night, members of Congress prepared to return and resume the count of the electoral college votes. (Michael Robinson Chavez/The Washington Post)

Devlin Barrett, Rachel Chason, Aaron Davis, Josh Dawsey, Peter Jamison, Marissa Lang, Katie Mettler, Ashley Parker, Philip Rucker, Rachel Siegel, Perry Stein and Rebecca Tan contributed to this report.

Updated January 8, 2021

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Capitol Police Officer Dies From Injuries in Pro-Trump Rampage

nytimes.com/2021/01/08/us/brian-sicknick-police-capitol-dies.html

January 8, 2021



A United States Capitol Police officer died on Thursday night from injuries sustained "while physically engaging" with pro-Trump rioters who descended on the U.S. Capitol the day before, the fifth fatality linked to the chaos that engulfed the nation's capital on Wednesday, according to the authorities.

The officer, Brian D. Sicknick, was only the fourth member of the force to be killed in the line of duty since its founding two centuries ago. After the bedlam of Wednesday's siege and the recriminations that filled the airwaves the next day, a silence descended over the Capitol grounds late Thursday as hundreds of law enforcement officers from scores of agencies lined the streets to pay tribute to their fallen comrade.

But the loss of life also underscored the failure of law enforcement agencies to prevent the siege of the Capitol. And with leaders of both political parties calling for investigations, it appeared likely to lead to calls for profound changes to the Capitol Police.

The circumstances surrounding Mr. Sicknick's death were not immediately clear, and the Capitol Police said only that he had "passed away due to injuries sustained while on duty." At some point in the chaos — with the mob rampaging through the halls of Congress while lawmakers were forced to hide under their desks — he was struck with a fire extinguisher, according to two law enforcement officials.

"He returned to his division office and collapsed," the Capitol Police said in the statement. "He was taken to a local hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries."

Mr. Sicknick, who joined the force in 2008, died at about 9:30 p.m. on Thursday, the Capitol Police said in a statement. The Washington police department's homicide branch is one of several law enforcement agencies involved in an investigation into his death and the overall circumstances of the violence at the Capitol.

The officer's death brings the fatalities from Wednesday's mayhem to five. One participant in the pro-Trump rampage, Ashli Babbitt, was fatally shot by a Capitol Police officer inside the building as she climbed through a broken window leading to the Speaker's Lobby. Three other people died after experiencing what were believed to be medical emergencies in the area around the Capitol, the police said.

It was unclear where Mr. Sicknick's encounter with the rioters took place, but photos and a video posted by a local reporter during the night of chaos showed a man spraying a fire extinguisher outside the Senate chamber, with a small number of police officers overlooking the area on a nearby stairway.

Lawmakers in both chambers and from both parties vowed to find out how those responsible for Capitol security had allowed a violent mob to infiltrate the building. House Democrats announced a "robust" investigation into the law enforcement breakdown.

Three of Congress's top security officials — Capitol Police Chief Steven A. Sund, House Sergeant at Arms Paul D. Irving and Senate Sergeant at Arms Michael C. Stenger — announced their resignations on Thursday.

The sergeants-at-arms are responsible for security in the chambers and related office buildings, while Mr. Sund oversaw roughly 2,000 Capitol Police personnel — a force larger than that of many small cities.

Image



Outside the Capitol on Thursday.Credit...Todd Heisler/The New York Times

Early Friday, Representative Tim Ryan of Ohio, a Democrat who runs the House Appropriations subcommittee that oversees the Capitol Police's budget, expressed sorrow in a Twitter post over Mr. Sicknick's death.

"This tragic loss is a reminder of the bravery of the law enforcement who protect us every day," Mr. Ryan wrote.

Representative Rosa DeLauro, a Connecticut Democrat who is chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee, which opened a review into the law enforcement response to the Capitol riot, said her "heart breaks over the senseless death."

"To honor his memory, we must ensure that the mob who attacked the People's House and those who instigated them are held accountable," she said on Twitter.

Hundreds of police officers and emergency response personnel lined the streets by the Capitol for a moment of silence to honor Mr. Sicknick on Thursday night. They stood in lines on Constitution Avenue and 3rd Street, saluting in silence as a police motorcade for Mr. Sicknick passed through the city, according to videos from local reporters at the scene.

The police force said in its own statement that "the entire U.S.C.P. department expresses its deepest sympathies to Officer Sicknick's family and friends on their loss, and mourns the loss of a friend and colleague."

Officials have said that about 50 police officers were injured as the mob swarmed barricades, threw objects, battered doors, smashed windows and overwhelmed some of the officers who tried to resist the advancing crowd.

The Capitol Police reported 14 arrests during the incursion, including two people accused of assaulting a police officer. The local police arrested dozens of others, mostly in connection with unlawful entry and violations of the city's Wednesday night curfew.

The riot inside the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, followed a rally at which President Trump made an inflammatory speech to his supporters, questioning the results of the election. Here's a look at what happened and the ongoing fallout:

- As this video shows, poor planning and a restive crowd encouraged by President Trump set the stage for the riot.
- A two hour period was crucial to turning the rally into the riot.
- Several Trump administration officials, including cabinet members Betsy DeVos and Elaine Chao, announced that they were stepping down as a result of the riot.
- Federal prosecutors have charged more than 70 people, including some who appeared in viral photos and videos of the riot. Officials expect to eventually charge hundreds of others.
- The House voted to impeach the president on charges of "inciting an insurrection" that led to the rampage by his supporters.

The Capitol Police force is charged solely with protecting the Capitol and surrounding grounds.

Over the course of two centuries, the force has evolved, its mission shifting and growing with the nature of the threats to the institution.

An event that had one of the most profound impacts on the force played out on March 1, 1954, when Puerto Rican nationalists opened fire from the visitor's gallery on lawmakers below, wounding five. Shortly afterward, the police were issued weapons for the first time.

Exactly 17 years later, on March 1, 1971, an explosion ripped through a ground-floor restroom in the Senate wing. The Weather Underground, a militant left-wing group that carried out a series of bombings in the late 1960s and 1970s, took responsibility. The incident led to the requirement of checking all visitors for weapons and explosives.

The first recorded death of a member of the force was in 1984, when Sgt. Christopher Eney, 37, was killed during a training exercise.

The last time a Capitol Police officer was killed in the line of duty was in the summer of 1998, when Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Detective John Gibson were fatally shot by Russell Eugene Weston Jr., a man tormented by visions of an oppressive federal government.

Image

A memorial at the Capitol honoring Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Detective John Gibson, who were killed by a gunman in 1998.Credit...Robert Giroux/Reuters

Mr. Weston, who was shot and injured in the incident, blasted his way into the nation's centerpiece of law and order. It all played out in a matter of minutes, reaching its bloody conclusion when he reached the majority whip's ground-floor office complex.

A fourth person, Angela Dickerson, 24, a tourist, was injured but recovered.

President Bill Clinton called the gunfight just inside the East Front entrance to the nation's lawmaking forum "a moment of savagery at the front door of American civilization."

Lawmakers from both parties said at the time that they hoped the bloodshed would allow for a moment reflection, when partisan divisions could start to be healed.

Two decades later, the fourth Capitol Police officer in history was killed.

Emily Cochrane and Katie Benner contributed reporting.

The New York Times | https://nyti.ms/39gQwdy

Inside a Deadly Siege: How a String of Failures Led to a Dark Day at the Capitol

Poor planning among a constellation of government agencies and a restive crowd encouraged by President Trump set the stage for the unthinkable.

By Mark Mazzetti, Helene Cooper, Jennifer Steinhauer, Zolan Kanno-Youngs and Luke Broadwater

Published Jan. 10, 2021 Updated Jan. 17, 2021

[Follow our live news coverage on the protests at the Capitol and across the country.]

WASHINGTON — Huddled in a command center on Wednesday afternoon, Mayor Muriel Bowser of Washington and her aides saw a photograph of blood stains on the temporary grandstands at the Capitol, a makeshift structure built for the inauguration of a new president in two weeks.

The enormity of the deadly failure sank in.

Rioters had broken through the thin police line on the Capitol steps and were descending on hundreds of lawmakers conducting the ceremonial, quadrennial act of certifying the presidential vote — and the mayor and her aides were not able to stop the attack.

Ms. Bowser and her police chief called the Pentagon, asking for additional D.C. National Guard troops to be mobilized to support what officials were realizing was inadequate protection at the Capitol. But they were told that the request would first have to come from the Capitol Police.

In a call to Chief Steven Sund of the Capitol Police, they learned that his force was under siege, lawmakers were being rushed to safety, and rioters were overrunning anyone in authority. He kept repeating the same phrase: "The situation is dire."

Cutting through the cross talk, one person on the call posed a blunt question: "Chief Sund, are you requesting National Guard troops on the grounds of the Capitol?"

There was a pause.

"Yes," Chief Sund replied, "I am."

Yet the Capitol Police and the city's Metropolitan Police had rebuffed offers days before for more help from the National Guard beyond a relatively modest contingent to provide traffic control, so no additional troops had been placed on standby. It took just over four hours for them to arrive.

It was just one failure in a dizzying list that day — and during the weeks leading up to it — that resulted in the first occupation of the United States Capitol since British troops set the building ablaze during the War of 1812. But the death and destruction this time was caused by Americans, rallying behind the inflammatory language of an American president, who refused to accept the will of more than 81 million other Americans who had voted him out of office.



A mob surrounded the Capitol on Wednesday after a Trump rally nearby. Jason Andrew for The New York Times

President Trump's call at a rally that day for the crowd to march on the nearby Capitol was surely a spark that helped ignite the deadly riots that left five dead — including a policeman and a woman who stormed the building — injured dozens of others and damaged the country's reputation for carrying out peaceful transfers of power. But the tinder for the blaze had been gathering for months, with every tweet that the election had been stolen, every refusal by Republican lawmakers to recognize Joseph R. Biden Jr. as the next president, every dog-whistle call that emboldened white supremacist groups to violently strike.

A full reckoning will take months or even years, and many lawmakers have called for a formal commission to investigate.

But an initial anatomy of the siege by The New York Times revealed numerous failures. The chaos showed that government agencies have no coordinated plan to defend against an attack on the Capitol — especially one specifically aimed at powerful elected officials — though law enforcement agencies have for years raised alarms about the growing threat of domestic terrorism. QAnon, an online conspiracy group that was well represented among the crowd, has been labeled a domestic terrorist threat by the F.B.I.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Vice President Mike Pence presided over the joint session of Congress that was disrupted by rioters storming the Capitol. Pool photo by Erin Schaff

Federal agencies and the Capitol Police appeared to issue no serious warnings in the days leading up to the riots that the gathering could turn violent, despite countless posts on right-wing social media sites pledging confrontation and even bloodshed.

The Department of Homeland Security invited local law enforcement agencies to its situation room — held online during the pandemic — only the day before the riots, which some security experts said was far too late.

Poor planning and communication among a constellation of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies hamstrung the response to the rioting. Once the Capitol building was breached, a patchwork group of reinforcements was forced to try to navigate a labyrinthine complex of unfamiliar passages and byways that would prove dangerous.

Above all, the fiasco demonstrated that government agencies were not prepared for a threat that, until recently, seemed unimaginable: when the person inciting the violence is the president of the United States.

The Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department did not respond to requests for comment. Ms. Bowser's chief of staff, John Falcicchio, said that defense officials determined the number of personnel deployed. But Pentagon officials said they made those decisions based on the specific requests they received.

The recriminations began almost immediately, and the violence also carried a sobering reality: The country got lucky. Hundreds of rioters carrying weapons breached the seat of American power — some with the clear intent of injuring, holding hostage or even killing federal officials to stop them from certifying the vote. In the end, all of the lawmakers were spirited away to safety.

"It was such an embarrassingly bad failure and immediately became an infamous moment in American history," said R.P. Eddy, a former American counterterrorism official and diplomat who now runs a private intelligence firm. "But it could have been so much worse."

Missed Warnings

"The Capitol is our goal. Everything else is a distraction," announced one post on far-right social media a day before the uprising. "Every corrupt member of Congress locked in one room and surrounded by real Americans is an opportunity that will never present itself again."

That was just one example of how extremists were organizing on social media.

In private Facebook groups, activists planning to make the trip to the capital discussed not only logistics like hotels and rideshares, but also sleeping in cars and pitching tents should they need to "occupy" the city. Many comments included photographs of guns and ammunition that they planned to bring.

Trump supporters broke windows to breach the building. Erin Schaff/The New York Times

On smaller social media platforms such as Parler and Gab that became rallying places for the far right, calls for violence were more overt. Dozens of posts in the days leading up to Wednesday listed assault rifles and other weapons that people claimed they were bringing to Washington. People discussed which types of ammunition were best and whether medics would be in place for those potentially injured.

Law enforcement and other officials were aware of the chatter and took some steps to try to reduce the chances of violence. Homeland security officials put tactical agents on standby in downtown Washington. The F.B.I. questioned neo-Nazis who were under investigation and planning to attend the demonstrations, prompting some of them to change their plans and skip the trip, officials said.

And on Monday, the Metropolitan Police Department arrested Enrique Tarrio, the leader of the Proud Boys, a far-right group. The police also announced before the rally that anyone who planned to show up to the demonstrations armed, in violation of local firearms laws, would be arrested.

But missed opportunities abounded. Despite the ominous social media posts, officials leading intelligence-sharing centers throughout the United States received no warnings from the federal government about the potential threat to the Capitol.

"We did not see any federal products related to this," said Mike Sena, the president of the National Fusion Center Association. Such centers were formed after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to improve communication and planning among federal and local agencies.

One senior federal prosecutor in the Midwest said he did not even speak with the top F.B.I. agent in his city about local residents possibly traveling to Washington. What the F.B.I. had been observing online, officials would later say, amounted to First Amendment-protected activity, despite the incendiary language in social media posts.

Intelligence experts denounced the inability — or refusal — of government analysts to provide proper warning about impending violence.

"The evidence is starkly clear that the momentum of violence has shifted to the right in this country. We've seen this in city after city," Mr. Eddy said. "There was a failure among law enforcement to imagine that people who 'look like me' would do this."

Chase Jennings, a spokesman for the Homeland Security Department, said in the days leading up to the breach at the Capitol, the agency "had open channels with partners and shared information on those channels."

Rioters who stormed the Capitol confronted law enforcement officials inside. Erin Schaff/The New York Times

Protests Last Year

Looming over preparation was the government's heavy-handed response to the Black Lives Matter demonstrations over the summer. Mr. Trump had deployed unidentified agents and tactical teams to the streets of Washington in June against the wishes of Ms. Bowser, and agents tear-gassed protesters, allowing the president to walk to a nearby church and stage a photo op holding a Bible. In the run-up to the violence on Wednesday, the fractured relationship between federal and local law enforcement was evident.

Ms. Bowser had sent a letter to top federal law enforcement officials on Tuesday warning against excessive deployments. Though the city had sought some National Guard troops for traffic control, she noted that the D.C. police had not requested additional personnel from law enforcement agencies for the rallies on Wednesday and referred to the aggressive deployment in June.

Still, federal law enforcement officials conveyed to lawmakers that they were prepared. David L. Bowdich, the F.B.I. deputy director, assured Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, that the bureau had the resources to handle the Trump rally.

The Justice Department was treating the event as relatively peaceful, officials said. The acting attorney general, Jeffrey A. Rosen, worked on Wednesday from his office rather than the F.B.I. war room, where the crisis response unfolded.

Several officials, including Chief Sund of the Capitol Police, briefed Representative Zoe Lofgren, Democrat of California and the chairwoman of the House Administration Committee, on Tuesday. The message was similar to the one that Chief Sund had given to other lawmakers for days.

"I was told by the police chief and the sergeant-at-arms that everything is under control and they had provided for every contingency," Ms. Lofgren said in an interview. "That turned out to be completely false."

'An Active, Hostile Situation'

Within minutes of the mob breaching the Capitol complex, rioters were pounding on the doors of the House gallery, where a group of nearly two dozen lawmakers were trapped. The sounds of shattering glass echoed through the chamber.

"I thought we'd either have to make a last stand or fight our way out," said Representative Jason Crow, Democrat of Colorado and a former Army Ranger who served in Iraq. "It was pretty hairy."

Representative Jason Crow, Democrat of Colorado, took shelter in the House gallery as the mob tried to break into the chamber. Andrew Harnik/Associated Press

An outnumbered force of Capitol Police had tried numerous tactics to keep the riot at bay, setting up barricades, using pepper spray and trying to push back against the mob at the building's doors and windows. All of these measures failed.

Lawmakers had no clear evacuation plan and were forced to improvise.

Mr. Crow said he moved other lawmakers away from the barricaded door inside the gallery, helped them don hoods to protect against tear gas, had them remove their House lapel pins to avoid being targeted and took out his only possible weapon: a pen.

After nearly 30 minutes, he said, the Capitol Police and unidentified SWAT team officers cleared a path outside the gallery, above the House floor, and hustled out the lawmakers.

With the police in the lead, guns drawn, the group stumbled through the mayhem, Mr. Crow said. Some police officers rushed to barricade other doors to block the mob. Others pinned some rioters to the ground to allow the lawmakers to pass.

Because of efforts to restrict the number of people in the chamber, several lawmakers and aides were sheltering in their offices, scattered across the complex. Some were not contacted by the police, even as they barricaded themselves inside.

Many of the House members remained in one secure location, where they might have been exposed to someone with the coronavirus, the Office of the Attending Physician said on Sunday.

Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester, Democrat of Delaware, pushed a handful of Republicans to wear masks, to no avail. Representatives Hakeem Jeffries, Democrat of New York, and Liz Cheney, Republican of Wyoming, periodically provided updates to the room, as lawmakers called their families and checked on their staff members.

On the Senate side of the Capitol, the rioters came perilously close to lawmakers. As they approached, a quick-thinking Capitol Police officer pushed one of them, then backed away, and the crowd chased him. The officer's maneuver helped lead the mob away from an entrance to the Senate several feet away, according to a video taken by Igor Bobic, a HuffPost reporter.

In a secure, undisclosed location, Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina, screamed at the Senate sergeant-at-arms, Michael C. Stenger, demanding a plan and ordering him to clear the rioters, according to a person in the room. Mr. Stenger was milling around, the person said, inspiring no confidence that he was in control of the situation. He has since resigned, as has Chief Sund. Throughout the Capitol, urgent voices crackled across police radios giving details about the unfolding siege.

"There was definitely a higher sense of urgency" on police radio traffic as rioters breached the east side of the Capitol, said Ashan M. Benedict, the head of the Washington field office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, who was working with the Capitol Police at the nearby Republican Party headquarters, where a pipe bomb was found.

Mr. Benedict connected with a commander of the Capitol Police SWAT team who was inside the complex, who acknowledged that they needed immediate help but said he needed a moment to arrange the official request.

The Capitol Police detained rioters outside the House chamber. Drew Angerer/Getty Images

A.T.F. and F.B.I. teams were soon headed to the Capitol. Neither bureau trains its agents for crowd control or riots, and they would have to find a way in, where they could help clear the Capitol and rescue staff members and employees.

When Mr. Benedict and his deputy finally got into the building, it was madness, he recalled. Clouds of noxious gas — bear spray, he guessed, from rioters — floated through the halls. With the help of a Capitol Police officer, they helped usher their teams through a growing crowd of rioters on the building's south side.

"We walked into an active, hostile situation," Mr. Benedict said. "Some were thanking us for our service. And some were asking us not to go in and protect the Capitol, and stand with them."

Chaos and Confusion

Thirty-three miles away, in Annapolis, Md., Gov. Larry Hogan, a Republican, was on a video conference call with the Japanese ambassador when his chief of staff rushed into his office, telling him, "The Capitol is under attack."

The governor's phone rang minutes later: a call from Representative Steny H. Hoyer of Maryland, the House majority leader.

"He's fired up. He's agitated. He's stressed," Mr. Hogan recalled in an interview. "He says, 'Governor, I'm in a room with Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer. We need help. What can you do?'"

By then, the mob had breached the security outside the building, and Ms. Bowser and her staff members had begun making urgent calls to mobilize larger numbers of D.C. National Guard troops and move those already in the city to the Capitol. In the days before, Ms. Bowser had requested only a relatively small contingent of 340 D.C. National Guard troops, and only to control traffic and help protect public transportation stops, an effort to avoid the militarized federal presence that had been a major factor in the protest response in June.

One of the calls was to Mr. Hogan, asking the governor to dispatch Maryland National Guard troops to the city. Because Washington, D.C., is not a state, the new request needed to be approved by the acting secretary of defense, Christopher C. Miller.

Mr. Hogan's phone rang. It was Ryan D. McCarthy, the secretary of the Army and the de facto head of the D.C. National Guard. He asked whether Maryland troops could come immediately.

"I said, 'Yes, we've been waiting,'" Mr. Hogan recalled.

Ms. Bowser was having similar problems. Even during the phone call when Chief Sund said he needed National Guard troops to beat back the rioters — a request the mayor and her staff members figured would immediately prompt an order of reinforcements — Pentagon officials would not commit to sending them.

Rioters climbing the Capitol walls. Jason Andrew for The New York Times

Lt. Gen. Walter E. Piatt, the director of the Army staff, who was on that call, reacted to Chief Sund's request with caution. He said that he did not have the authority to send the troops, that the request would have to go through his chain of command, and that the group needed a plan for how the National Guard would be deployed.

Chief Robert J. Contee of the Metropolitan Police was livid.

"Are you denying the request?" he asked General Piatt three times.

"We are not denying the request," the general insisted. But, he added, he would have to seek approval first. The phone call ended.

Inside the mayor's command center, where officials recalled the debacle in June when the military sent a helicopter to Black Lives Matter protests, frustration turned to anger.

"The Capitol Police were requesting the guard, they were not getting the request fulfilled, and we are seeing blood on the ground of the United States Capitol. That was the moment for me," said Mr. Falcicchio, the mayor's chief of staff.

In an interview, General Piatt defended his caution.

"The last thing you want to do is throw forces at it where you have no idea where they're going, and all of a sudden it gets a lot worse," he said.

Inside the besieged Capitol, lawmakers were making their own urgent requests to the Pentagon. Representative Elissa Slotkin, Democrat of Michigan and a former defense official, called Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to plead for help from the National Guard.

"What I was hearing is that the Pentagon was really struggling with the request," she said, because of the response to the protests in June, which had brought intense criticism upon the Defense Department and General Milley.

"We all should acknowledge that this was a tough decision" because of the violence last year, Ms. Slotkin said. "I said, 'Mark, I absolutely understand that you are between a rock and a hard place. But we need help here.'"

Finally, at about 3 p.m., Mr. Miller decided that all available D.C. National Guard soldiers — 1,100 troops — would be deployed.

Help Arrives

As the Pentagon deliberated, city officials sent an urgent dispatch to all local police forces asking for help.

Ed Roessler, the police chief in Fairfax County, Va., was driving when his phone rang at 2:27 p.m. A deputy told him that a request for help had just gone out over the police mutual aid radio system used by law enforcement agencies in the Washington region. He was stunned.

"It was surreal," said Chief Roessler, a 32-year veteran of the department. "To get a request over the police mutual aid radio system — I don't recall something at this level."

About 40 Fairfax County officers were quickly deputized by an official from the United States marshals and sent to Washington. At the Capitol, they assembled in a wedge formation and went inside, where they helped push out rioters.

Then they stood guard while officers from other agencies built a larger security perimeter around the Capitol.

Other requests for help went out, and the Capitol Police also sought assistance from the Homeland Security Department, but not until more than an hour after the rioters had surrounded the Capitol and the police had first fired what appeared to be flash-bang grenades.

When the request came at 2:30 p.m., the Secret Service deployed both uniformed and special agents, according to Kenneth T. Cuccinelli II, the acting deputy secretary of homeland security, the parent agency of the Secret Service.

Asked if he wondered why the request from the Capitol Police came at 2:30, Mr. Cuccinelli said, "It's pretty clear they were underprepared, unfortunately."

Placing Blame

National Guard troops patrolled the Capitol over the weekend. Anna Moneymaker for The New York Times

When the rioters breached the Capitol, Senator Kevin Cramer, Republican of North Dakota, said a quick prayer.

As he and the other senators made their way out of the chamber to the basement, an officer urged them to hurry because the rioters were on their heels.

"'Move quicker, people,' the officer said. 'They're right behind.' It was serious," Mr. Cramer recalled.

Out of immediate danger, senators took roll call. Four were missing, including Senator Tammy Duckworth, Democrat of Illinois, who uses a wheelchair after sustaining injuries in Iraq. She had barricaded herself in her office.

Inside the secure location, some senators grew increasingly angry at Senators Ted Cruz of Texas and Josh Hawley of Missouri — Republicans who had vowed to fight the election certification unless a commission was established to investigate Mr. Trump's baseless claims of voter fraud.

Senator Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, a moderate Democrat, said he approached Senators Steve Daines of Montana and James Lankford of Oklahoma, Republicans who had planned to object to the election to send a message.

"'Steve, c'mon, you don't want to be part of this,'" Mr. Manchin recalled saying. "I said, 'James, you're better than this.'"

Mr. Manchin said the appeals affected them, but Mr. Hawley showed no remorse.

"Josh Hawley started the whole thing, and all who assisted him, they've got to be held accountable," Mr. Manchin said.

When asked to respond, spokespeople for Mr. Hawley said he had quickly condemned the violence and never claimed there was widespread election fraud, making only a narrow argument about mail balloting in Pennsylvania. Mr. Hawley has declined interviews in the aftermath of the riot.

For others, the blame goes far wider.

Senator Amy Klobuchar, Democrat of Minnesota, said she and other senators were investigating what went wrong and focusing on how to keep Mr. Biden's inauguration safe.

"There clearly needs to be an overhaul of security," she said, adding that ultimately, the blame fell on the president of the United States.

"He convinced them this was a righteous cause, to be part of an insurrection," Ms. Klobuchar said. "And they went for it."

Reporting was contributed by Eric Schmitt, Adam Goldman, Emily Cochrane and Katie Benner from Washington, Ali Watkins, Ashley Southall and Shaila Dewan from New York, and Sheera Frenkel from Oakland, Calif.

'Kill him with his own gun': Police describe facing the mob at the Capitol

cnn.com/2021/01/14/politics/police-officers-capitol-riot-hodges-fanone/index.html

January 15, 2021



*Washington (CNN)*As DC Metropolitan Police Officer Michael Fanone lay on the ground at the US Capitol building, stunned and injured, he knew a group of rioters were stripping him of his gear. They grabbed spare ammunition, ripped the police radio off his chest and even stole his badge.

Then, Fanone, who had just been Tasered several times in the back of the neck, heard something chilling that made him go into survival mode.
"Some guys started getting a hold of my gun and they were screaming out, 'Kill him with his own gun,'" said Fanone, who's been a police officer for almost two decades.

Key arrests so far from the Capitol riot
Fanone, one of three officers who spoke with CNN, described his experience fighting a mob of President Donald Trump's supporters who'd invaded the Capitol in an insurrection unheard of in modern American history.
Federal officials have said the details of the violence that come out will be disturbing.
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"People are going to be shocked by some of the egregious contact that happened in the Capitol," acting US Attorney Michael Sherwin said Tuesday in reference to attacks on police officers.

Fanone, a narcotics detective who works in plain clothes, heard the commotion at the Capitol and grabbed his still brand-new police uniform that had been hanging in his locker and put it on for the first time, he said. He raced to the building with his partner and helped officers who were being pushed back by rioters.

Metropolitan Police Officer Michael Fanone

But Fanone, who said he'd rather be shot than be pulled into a crowd where he had no control, was suddenly in his biggest nightmare as an officer. And in those few moments, Fanone considered using deadly force. He thought about using his gun but knew that he didn't have enough fire power and he'd soon be overpowered again, except this time they would probably use his gun against him and they'd have all the reason to end his life.

"So, the other option I thought of was to try to appeal to somebody's humanity. And I just remember yelling out that I have kids. And it seemed to work," said the 40-year-old father of four.

FBI Director Wray says over 200 suspects identified in US Capitol riots

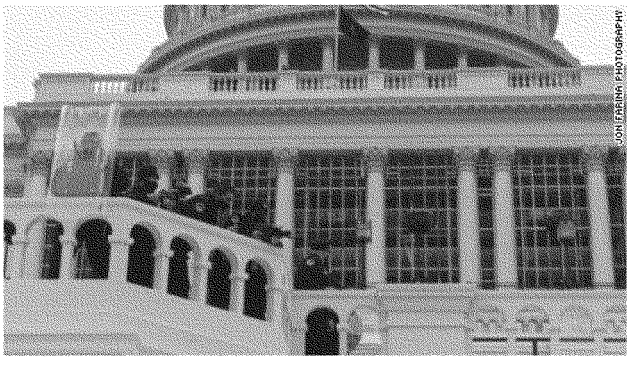
A group within the rioters circled Fanone and protected him until help arrived, saving his life.

"Thank you, but f*** you for being there," Fanone said of the rioters who protected him in that moment.

Fanone's anger and frustration was a sentiment felt by law enforcement around the country, furious that Trump supporters had breached the grounds of the Capitol on the very day Joe Biden's win was confirmed by the House and Senate.

Fanone's dramatic encounter with the Trump supporting rioters was repeated all over the grounds of the US Capitol as law enforcement officers battled to push them back. Fanone, one of scores of officers who were injured in the brutal battle, shared his story for the first time, still suffering the effects of a mild heart attack.

Since the breach of the Capitol, investigators have been dissecting every aspect of the day's events, from the response of US Capitol Police to the nationwide manhunt for everyone involved.



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Hear photographer describe terrifying moment on Capitol Hill

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Hear photographer describe terrifying moment on Capitol Hill 02:24

Investigators are now looking into the notion that here was some level of planning, with enough evidence to indicate that it was not just a protest that got out of control, law enforcement sources tell CNN.

"Certainly some things that we saw on the ground were some indication that there were some coordination going on, but I think as we get further into the investigation, a lot of that will be revealed," acting MPD Chief Robert Contee told reporters Thursday.

Fanone said the rioters had weapons, either of their own or taken from his fellow police. "We were getting chemical irritants sprayed. They had pipes and different metal objects, batons, some of which I think they had taken from law enforcement personnel. They had been striking us with those," said Fanone, who added that he wasn't going to be sitting at a desk while an insurrection was happening at the Capitol.

Lawmakers take new security steps and voice growing frustration over safety concerns following deadly riot

"And then it was just the sheer number of rioters. The force that was coming from that side," he added. "It was difficult to offer any resistance when you're only about 30 guys going up against 15,000."

Fighting off 'bear mace'

Officer Christina Laury, a member of the Metropolitan Police Department's gun recovery unit, got to the Capitol at around 12:30 p.m. ET and saw the riotous groups gaining ground. Laury, who was guarding the line to make sure there were no gaps for anyone to slip through, was hit with a much stronger type of pepper spray that's supposed to be used only on bears, she said.

"The individuals were pushing officers, hitting officers. They were spraying us with what we were calling, essentially, bear mace, because you use it on bears," she said.

"Unfortunately, it shuts you down for a while. It's way worse than pepper spray," Laury added. "It seals your eyes shut. ... You've got to spray and douse yourself with water. And in those moments it's scary because you can't see anything and have people that are fighting to get through."

She was lucky enough not to be struck with anything but saw others beaten with objects. "They were getting hit with metal objects. Metal poles. I remember seeing pitchforks. They're getting sprayed, knocked down," said Laury, who added that reinforcements kept rotating in so others could rest during the hours-long battle.

"Just puling officers back to heal up and (reinforcements) stepping in to get to the front line. And then they go down and more officers step in and the officers that were knocked down, they're better again and they're just battling because the bottom line is, we're not letting anyone through."

'He was practically foaming at the mouth'

Officer Daniel Hodges was one of those officers who tried to battle back rioters but was roughed up in the fight. Hodges gained notice after footage of him circulated being crushed by a door. The 32-year-old officer is seen in the clip with blood dripping through his teeth as he kept gasping for enough air so he could yell "Help" at the top of his lungs.
Hodges raced to the Capitol to offer support like many others and soon found himself being assaulted from an angry mob that, he said, believed they were patriots.

Metropolitan Police Officer Daniel Hodges
"There's a guy ripping my mask off, he was able to rip away the baton and beat me with it," said Hodges, who was stuck in the door and added that his arm was bent before they ripped the weapon away.
"He was practically foaming at the mouth so just, these people were true believers in the worst way."
Hodges was eventually rescued by other officers who eventually came to his aid.
"You know things were looking bad," said Hodges, who miraculously walked away with no major injuries and may have suffered a minor concussion. "I was calling out for all I was worth, and an officer behind me was able to get me enough room to pull me out of there and get me to the rear so I was able to extricate myself."
This was Hodges's first visit to the Capitol building.



JUST WATCHED

Ex-FBI director on what investigators are looking for after Capitol riot

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Ex-FBI director on what investigators are looking for after Capitol riot 02:06

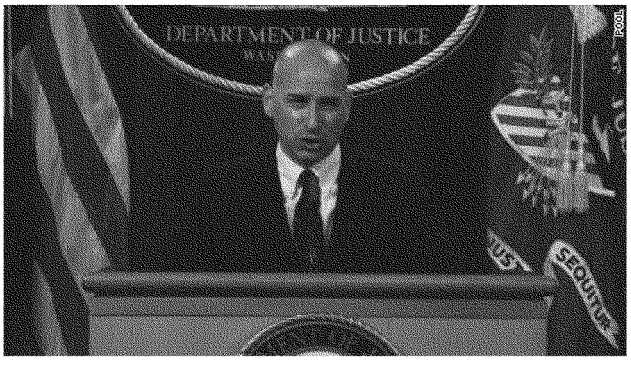
'They felt entitled'

The patrol officer said he had been hearing about the possibility of violence for years so he wasn't surprised that the rioters would storm the Capitol. What did surprise him was how the insurrectionists thought the police would be on their side.

"Some of them felt like we would be fast friends because so many of them have been vocal," Hodges said. "They say things like, 'Yeah, we've been supporting you through all this Black Lives Matter stuff, you should have our back' and they felt entitled."

He added, "They felt like they would just walk up there and tell us that they're here to take back Congress and we would agree with them and we'd walk in hand in hand and just take over the nation. But obviously that's not the case and it will never be the case."

Now, only days before Biden's inauguration, federal authorities are warning of other threats that may come.



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US Attorney: Looking at sedition and conspiracy cases

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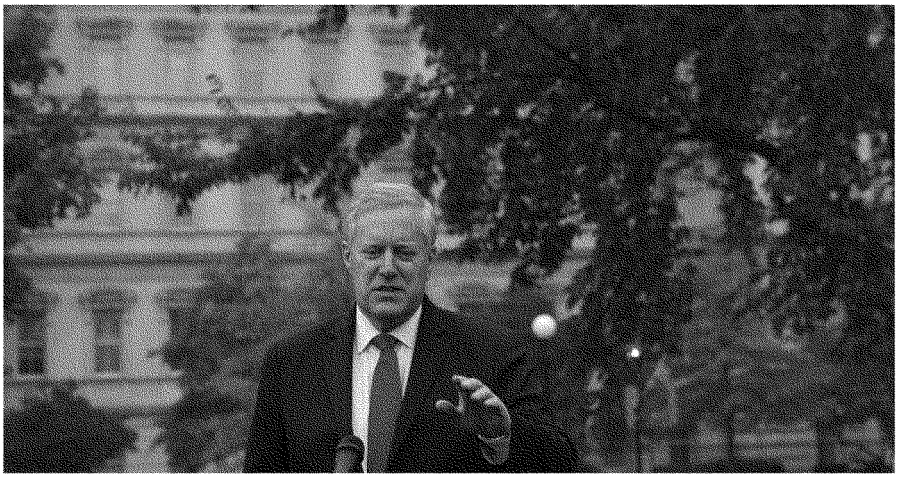
US Attorney: Looking at sedition and conspiracy cases 03:02

DC Mayor Muriel Bowser has publicly warned people not to come to the city for the inauguration.
Hodges echoed her sentiments, and wanted not only residents, but Trump supporters and extremists to stay home too. But with one caveat.
"Stay home. Stop this," said Hodges. "On the other hand, I hope they're caught. Let's leave it at that."

White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows questions Ga. signature audit

ajc.com/politics/top-trump-aide-mark-meadows-visits-georgia-ballot-signature-audit/LC5HBS3AUVH4ZONJFSEL5RO2XA/



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Top Trump aide Mark Meadows visits Georgia ballot signature audit

White House chief of staff Mark Meadows made a surprise visit Tuesday to observe Georgia's . audit of absentee ballot envelope signatures and ask questions about the process. Meadows, accompanied by Secret Service agents, showed up at the Cobb County Civic Center, . where investigators from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and secretary of state's office were reviewing absentee ballot envelopes to check whether voter signatures match those on file. He met with Deputy Secretary of State Jordan Fuchs in a hallway to inquire about the signature audit and what it would find. He wasn't permitted inside the room where investigators were examining ballot envelopes. Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger has said the signature audit will restore confidence in Georgia's elections and further dispel unsubstantiated fraud claims. The audit, scheduled to be completed by next week, won't change the outcome of Georgia's election, . which Democrat Joe Biden won by about 12,000 votes over Republican President Donald Trump

Politics | Dec 22, 2020

By Mark Niesse, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
White House chief of staff Mark Meadows made a surprise visit Tuesday to observe Georgia's audit of absentee ballot envelope signatures and ask questions about the process.

Meadows, accompanied by Secret Service agents, showed up at the Cobb County Civic Center, where investigators from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and secretary of state's office were reviewing absentee ballot envelopes to check whether voter signatures match those on file.

He met with Deputy Secretary of State Jordan Fuchs in a hallway to inquire about the signature audit and what it would find. He wasn't permitted inside the room where investigators were examining ballot envelopes.

"I'm not making any allegations as much as I am trying to get to the truth," Meadows was overheard saying.



White House chief of staff Mark Meadows meets Tuesday with Georgia Deputy Secretary of State Jordan Fuchs at the Cobb County Civic Center, where investigators were conducting an audit of voter signatures on absentee ballot envelopes. MARK NIESSE /

MARK.NIESSE@AJC.COM

Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger has said the signature audit will restore confidence in Georgia's elections and further dispel unsubstantiated fraud claims.

The audit, scheduled to be completed by next week, won't change the outcome of Georgia's election, which Democrat Joe Biden won by about 12,000 votes over Republican President Donald Trump.

ExploreAtlanta wedding hosted by top Trump aide violated city's curfew
"Chief of Staff Mark Meadows made a visit here in Cobb County. He wanted to know the process of the signature match audit we're currently conducting," Fuchs said after their meeting. "He just asked basic process questions, wanted to know what exactly we were verifying."

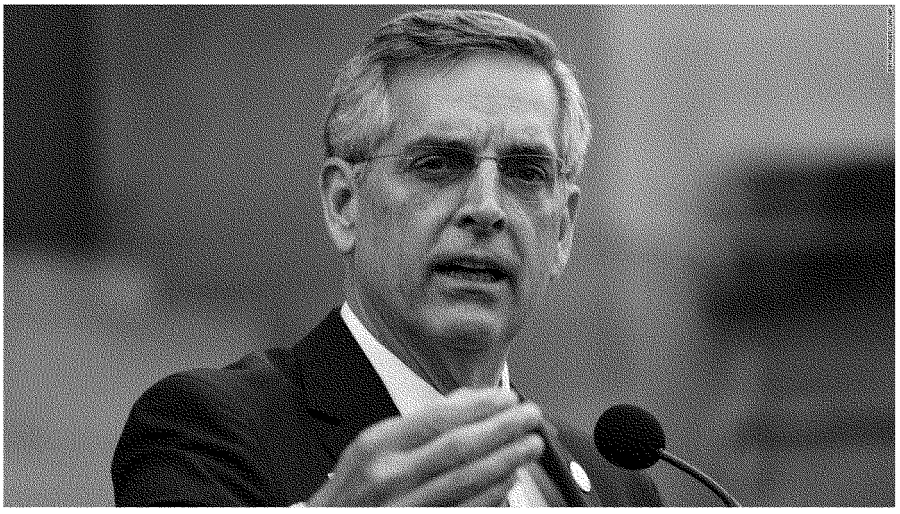
Meadows, who reports to Trump, didn't speak about the reason for his visit. His office didn't immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

In Other News

Georgia's GOP governor and secretary of state certify Biden win, quashing Trump's longshot attempt to overturn results

cnn.com/2020/11/20/politics/georgia-certify-secretary-of-state-raffensperger/index.html

November 20, 2020



*(CNN)*Republican Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp on Friday signed the paperwork that officially grants the state's 16 electoral votes to President-elect Joe Biden.

"The Governor has formalized the certification delivered to our office by the Secretary of State -- as is required by state law," Kemp spokesman Tate Mitchell told CNN in an email. The certification is a major blow to President Donald Trump's longshot efforts to overturn the outcome of the election in Georgia, and all but seals Biden's razor-thin win in the state. State law required Kemp to award Georgia's electoral votes to the certified winner of the presidential election. A federal judge on Thursday rejected a last-ditch lawsuit that tried to block certification, and Biden's victory was certified Friday afternoon by Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger.

"State law now requires the governor's office to formalize the certification, which paves the way for the Trump campaign to pursue other legal options and a separate recount if they choose," Kemp said, later adding, "As governor, I have a solemn responsibility to follow the law, and that is what I will do."

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The announcement caps a whirlwind day where Raffensperger's office announced that the results were certified, only to send a "correction" one hour later, saying the process was still ongoing. A third press release around 4 p.m. ET, said certification was completed.

Biden won Georgia by 12,670 votes, or 0.26% of the nearly 5 million ballots cast statewide, according to final certified results from the Georgia Secretary of State.

"Numbers don't lie," Raffensperger said during a news conference earlier Friday. "As secretary of state, I believe that the numbers that we are presented today are correct."

Because of the close margin, the Trump campaign can request a recount. Georgia already conducted a statewide audit, hand-counting about 5 million ballots, and any future recount is extremely unlikely to change the results.

Certifying election results is typically a formality, but the process has become the latest battleground in Trump's longshot attempt to cling onto power. His campaign is trying to block or delay certification in key states in hopes of overturning Biden's victory through the Electoral College.

The scheme essentially becomes impossible if key states certify their presidential results before December 8, which is known as a "safe harbor" deadline under federal law. Now that Georgia has certified its results, the state has met the deadline and Congress is required to respect the pro-Biden slate of electors.

While going through the motions of formalizing Biden's win, Kemp simultaneously raised concerns about the integrity of the process and even embraced some of Trump's complaints about the process in Georgia.

Kemp asked Raffensperger to conduct a partial audit of absentee ballots to double-check that the signatures matched -- caving to a persistent demand from Trump throughout the post-election process. It's unclear if this can happen at this stage of the process, and CNN has reached out to Raffensperger's office for comment.

Trump has mentioned the governor in at least six tweets since Election Day, encouraging Kemp to "get tough" and make the state "flip Republican," even though Georgia voters backed Biden, the Democratic nominee. He also encouraged Kemp to "take charge" after it became clear the audit wasn't uncovering widespread irregularities.

But in the tweets, Trump also berated Kemp, blaming him for a legal agreement the state reached earlier this year with Democratic groups regarding absentee ballots. Raffensberger's office has said Trump is mischaracterizing the agreement, known as a consent decree, which he falsely claimed weakened verification rules for absentee ballots.

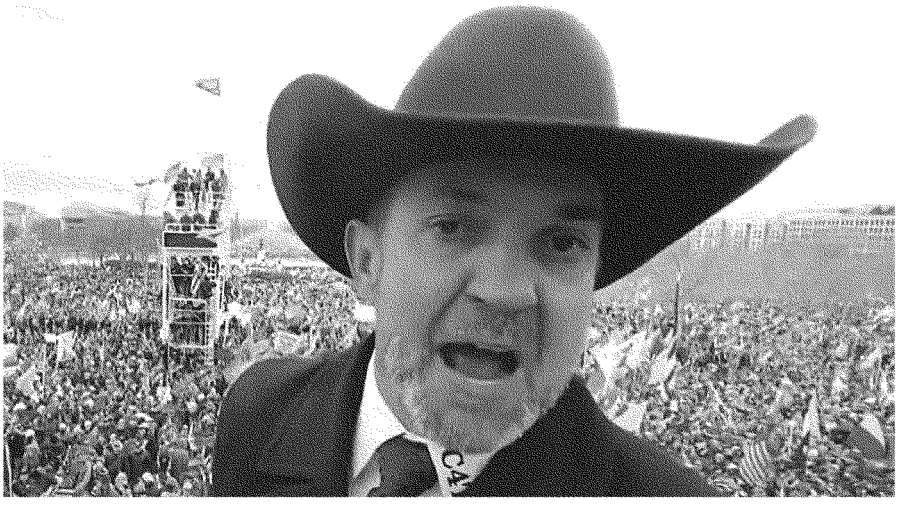
Kemp also said it was "unacceptable" that small batches of uncounted ballots were found during the audit. Election officials have repeatedly said these mishandled ballots were caused by mistakes and incompetence -- not fraud. Raffensberger has balked at efforts by Trump and his GOP allies to undermine the vote-counting process in the state and has vigorously defended the integrity of the presidential race in Georgia.

This story has been updated with additional developments on Friday.

CNN's Caroline Kelly contributed to this report.

'Cowboys For Trump' Founder Arrested In D.C. After Vowing To Bring Guns To Inauguration

huffpost.com/entry/new-mexico-couy-griffin-capitol-attack-guns-arrest_n_6004fdbbc5b6df63a917de7e



CRIME
01/18/2021 06:27 am ET

After storming Capitol barricades, New Mexico County Commissioner Couy Griffin said "blood" would run from the building when rioters return, said an FBI affidavit.



By Mary Papenfuss

A New Mexico county commissioner who heads Cowboys for Trump was arrested Sunday in Washington, D.C., by Capitol Police after vowing to bring back his guns for Inauguration Day.

Couy Griffin was wanted on an arrest warrant after storming the barricades of the Capitol Jan. 6, said authorities. He drove back from his New Mexico home in time for the inauguration Wednesday, a journey he chronicled on Facebook.

Griffin said in a chilling Facebook video clip on "Inside Edition" last Monday that "there's going to be blood running" from the Capitol when rioters return.

"There will never be a Biden presidency," he vowed in an interview on the program. "We're not going to allow it."

Griffin was charged in a criminal complaint Friday with "knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds" in the Capitol attack. Authorities did not reveal if Griffin was found with guns when he was arrested Sunday.

> Per FBI: Couy Griffin, founder of Cowboys for Trump, from New Mexico was arrested this afternoon in DC. He had an arrest warrant for his participation in the January 6 Capitol riots. He said rioters will come back to the Capitol for inauguration. This is the moment of his arrest. pic.twitter.com/3LoXXsYVFD
>
> — Alberto Pimienta (@apimientaDC) January 17, 2021

On Thursday, Griffin told his fellow commissioners that he planned to travel with his guns back to Washington for President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration.

"I'm gonna be there on January 20 ... and I'm gonna take a stand for our country and for our freedoms," Griffin said in a videotaped meeting of the Otero County Board of Commissioners.

"I've got a .357 Henry Big Boy rifle, lever action, that I've got in the trunk of my car and I've got a .357 single-action revolver, the Colt Ruger Vaquero, that I'll have underneath the front seat ... and I will embrace my Second Amendment," he warned in a disturbing speech. He baselessly insisted at the meeting that the presidential election was "fraudulent on every level. It was stolen by Communist China. The evidence is irrefutable."

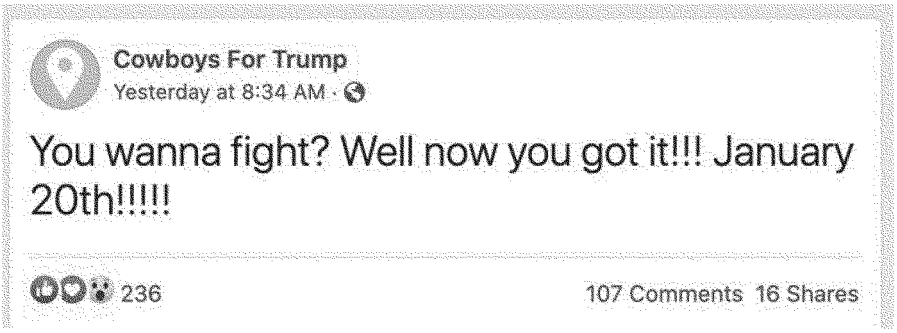
There is no such evidence.

On the Facebook video where he vowed blood would run, which has since been taken down, Griffin also stated: "At the end of the day, you mark my word, we will plant our flag on the desk of Nancy Pelosi," said an FBI affidavit presented with the criminal complaint against Griffin.

He told FBI agents who interviewed him that he hoped a change in leadership could be accomplished "without a single shot being fired." But he noted if that was not an option, "that's off the table for the sake of freedom," the affidavit stated.

Griffin - Affidavit 0 by Jim Parker

Threatening messages concerning the inauguration have also been posted on his Cowboys for Trump Facebook page. "You wanna fight? Well now you got it!!! January 20th!!!!!" read a Saturday post.



Screen Shot/Facebook/Cowboys for Trump

Facebook post from Couy Griffin's Cowboys for Trump.

New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas on Saturday called on Griffin to resign from the Otero County Commission. After Griffin's arrest, Balderas said he would take action to remove Griffin from office.

His "participation in the violent insurrectionist attack on the United States Capitol ... is a direct violation of your sworn oath of office, and a danger to our society," Balderas told Griffin in a letter. "Your incendiary comments from the steps of the Capitol and your calls to incite violence against the foundation of our nation's democracy cannot be tolerated from an elected official."

> pic.twitter.com/nJ3Y9rRwpk
>
> — Hector Balderas (@HectorBalderas) January 17, 2021

Griffin could not immediately be reached for comment. He told FBI agents that he got "caught up" in the attack on the Capitol, but that he did not enter the building. He was videotaped, however, beyond the barricades in restricted areas, according to the affidavit.

BEFORE YOU GO

Suggest a correction

House Democrats Briefed On 3 Terrifying Plots To Overthrow Government

huffpost.com/entry/democrats-briefed-plot-overthrow-government_n_5ffd29a4c5b691806c4bf199



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POLITICS
01/12/2021 12:44 am ET **Updated** 6 days ago

One plot includes surrounding the Capitol and murdering Democrats to allow Republicans to take control of the government.



By Matt Fuller

WASHINGTON – Capitol Police briefed Democrats on Monday night about three more potentially gruesome demonstrations planned in the coming days, with one plot to encircle the U.S. Capitol and assassinate Democrats and some Republicans.

On a private call Monday night, new leaders of the Capitol Police told House Democrats they were closely monitoring three separate plans that could pose serious threats to members of Congress as Washington prepares for Democrat Joe Biden's presidential inauguration on Jan. 20.

The first is a demonstration billed as the "largest armed protest ever to take place on American soil."

Another is a protest in honor of Ashli Babbitt, the woman killed while trying to climb into the Speaker's Lobby during Wednesday's pro-Trump siege of the Capitol.

And another demonstration, which three members said was by far the most concerning plot, would involve insurrectionists forming a perimeter around the Capitol, the White House and the Supreme Court, and then blocking Democrats from entering the Capitol – perhaps even killing them – so that Republicans could take control of the government.

The members of Congress whom HuffPost spoke to Monday night were extremely concerned by the call.

"It was pretty overwhelming," one member said.

Officials on the call warned lawmakers about sharing too much information with the media, saying that divulging specific dates, times and countermeasures could aid the organizers of the plots. HuffPost is not disclosing certain information, such as who appears to be organizing these plots and when they are to take place.

One member was explicit that these groups were trying to get journalists to report on their demonstrations.

"Some of their main communications to organize these have been cut off, so they're purposely trying to get the media to report on this as a way to further disseminate information and to attract additional support for their attacks," this member said.

Democrats were told that the Capitol Police and the National Guard were preparing for potentially tens of thousands of armed protesters coming to Washington and were establishing rules of engagement for warfare. In general, the military and police don't plan to shoot anyone until one of the rioters fires, but there could be exceptions.

Lawmakers were told that the plot to encircle the Capitol also included plans to surround the White House – so that no one could harm Trump – and the Supreme Court, simply to shut down the courts. The plan to surround the Capitol includes assassinating Democrats as well as Republicans who didn't support Trump's effort to overturn the election – and allowing other Republicans to enter the building and control government.

All of these plots may never materialize. The Capitol Police have established a new perimeter with fencing and razor wire, and the National Guard has already been called in to help protect the Capitol and lawmakers.

But while Capitol Police assured members they were prepared for these terrorist plots, there was obvious concern from a number of lawmakers.

One topic of discussion was the need to put every member of Congress through a metal detector before the inauguration. A member on the call told HuffPost that there was an "eyes-wide-open realization" that Capitol Police needed to take precautions against "all these members who were in league with the insurrectionists who love to carry their guns."

"You can't just let them bypass security and walk right up to [Joe] Biden and [Kamala] Harris at inauguration," this lawmaker told HuffPost.

Another area of concern was the Trump administration's involvement in tamping down an insurrection. "I don't think anyone has confidence that the folks at the Pentagon, that may or may not even be needed for some of this, or the Department of Homeland Security, where we don't even know who's in charge, are going to be cooperative," one member told HuffPost.

One Democrat on the call also raised the issue of security for members coming from their residences to the Capitol, as well as traveling to Washington, given recent confrontations at airports and on flights between some protesters and lawmakers. One member who spoke to HuffPost said the Capitol Police didn't have a satisfactory answer about that concern.

This member mentioned how the briefing had underscored the wisdom of Twitter suspending Trump's account, as well as tens of thousands of accounts associated with the right-wing conspiracy theory QAnon, and said the decision to cut off the social media platform Parler "looked a lot smarter" given the efforts to recruit armed extremists to come to the nation's capital in the coming days.

"It's a decision that might ultimately save lives," this member said.

One of the lawmakers who spoke to HuffPost said members of Congress were all experiencing difficult reactions to the storming of the Capitol last week.

"Most of us are feeling that," this Democrat said. "But we are also feeling that we don't have time to indulge too much of it, that this is not about us, that it's about a job that's way bigger than us, and we are just going to suck it up and get through, and we'll talk about how nutty it is on the other side."

Amanda Terkel and Jennifer Bendery contributed to this report.



Suggest a correction

Prosecutors to Barr: No evidence of substantial election irregularities - The Washington Post

washingtonpost.com/national-security/william-barr-election-memo/2020/11/13/6ed06d20-25e4-11eb-a688-5298ad5d580a_story.html

By Matt Zapotosky and close Matt Zapotosky National security reporter covering the Justice Department Email Email Bio Bio Follow Follow Tom Hamburger close Tom Hamburger Investigative reporter focused on the intersection of money and politics in Washington Email Email Bio Bio Follow Follow

Sixteen assistant U.S. attorneys specially assigned to monitor malfeasance in the 2020 election urged Attorney General William P. Barr on Friday to rescind his recent memorandum allowing investigators to publicly pursue allegations of "vote tabulation irregularities" in certain cases before results are certified, saying they had not seen evidence of any substantial anomalies.

In a letter — an image of which was shown to The Washington Post — the assistant U.S. attorneys told Barr that the release of his Monday memorandum — which changed long-standing Justice Department policy on the steps prosecutors can take before the results of an election are certified — "thrusts career prosecutors into partisan politics."

The signers wrote that in the places where they served as district election officers, taking in reports of possible election-related crimes, there was no evidence of the kind of fraud that Barr's memo had highlighted. Barr's memo authorized prosecutors "to pursue substantial allegations of voting and vote tabulation irregularities prior to the certification of elections in your jurisdictions in certain cases," particularly where the outcome of an election could be affected.

"The policy change was not based in fact," the assistant U.S. attorneys wrote.

Shock and frustration inside Justice Dept. over Barr's vote-investigation memo

The letter was signed by assistant U.S. attorneys in 15 different federal court districts: Western Pennsylvania, Western North Carolina, New Mexico, Maryland, Southern Ohio, Eastern Kentucky, Southern Iowa, Western Arkansas, Southern New York, Eastern New York, Oregon, Kansas, Northern California, the Virgin Islands and the Northern Mariana Islands. Two signers were from Oregon.

Asked for comment on the assistant U.S. attorneys' assertions, Kerri Kupec, a Justice Department spokeswoman, said, "Perhaps they did not read the memo." She pointed to a section in which Barr urged caution, noting, "Nothing here should be taken as any indication that the Department has concluded that voting irregularities have impacted the outcome of any election.

"While it is imperative that credible allegations be addressed in a timely and effective manner, it is equally imperative that Department personnel exercise appropriate caution and maintain the Department's absolute commitment to fairness, neutrality and non-partisanship," the section read. "You are the most senior leaders in the United States Department of Justice and I trust you to exercise great care and judgment in addressing allegations of voting and vote tabulation irregularities. While serious allegations should be handled with great care, specious, speculative, fanciful or far-fetched claims should not be a basis for initiating federal inquiries."

Current and former Justice Department officials have in recent days told The Washington Post they were stunned and frustrated by Barr's election-related directive, as they worried Barr was aiding President Trump's effort to cast doubt on his defeat.

Some weeks ago, when Barr had first proposed the move, officials in the criminal division — including political leadership — had pushed back vigorously and thought they had dissuaded the attorney general from taking such a step, only to be blindsided when the memo hit their inboxes Monday. The head of the department's election-crimes branch, Richard Pilger, told colleagues within hours that he was stepping down from that job and taking a lesser position at the department, citing the new guidance.

The district election officers wrote, "We disagree with the Memorandum's argument that the impact of taking overt investigative and prosecutorial actions on the outcome of an election is greatly minimized after voting ends but before certification occurs."

Critics have said Trump could now point to the memo itself to aid his unfounded claims of massive voter fraud, and perhaps U.S. attorneys across the country would feel empowered to hold news conferences or take other public steps that would suggest massive fraud, even if it was far from proven. Barr noted in the memo that he had already greenlighted investigative steps "in specific instances," but did not detail what those were, and Justice Department officials said it was unclear to what he was referring.

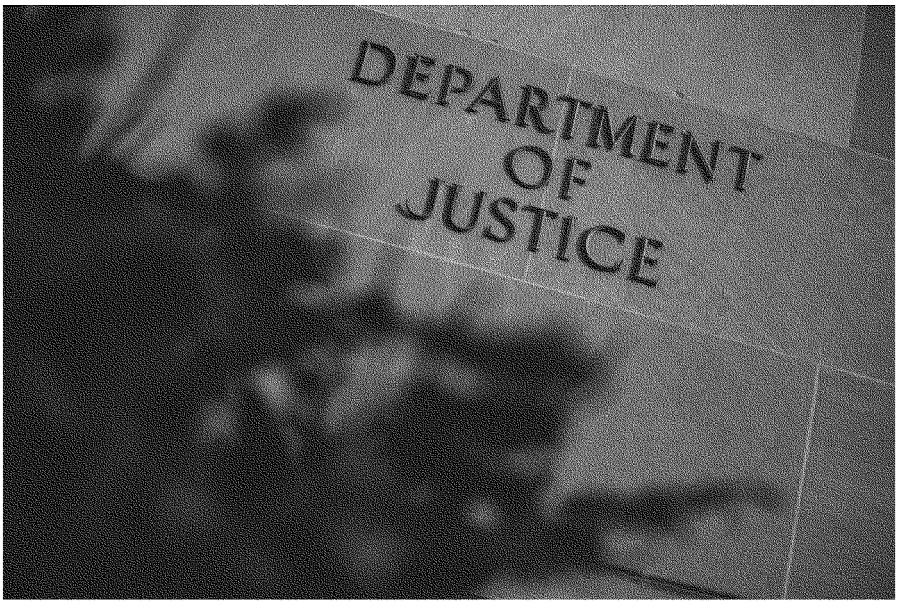
Others have said the memo was so heavily caveated that it was unlikely to have a real impact. On Friday, 23 Democratic state attorneys general — including those in Michigan, Wisconsin and Nevada, where Trump has pursued or threatened legal challenges — also sent a letter to Barr complaining about the policy change and noting that "so far, no plausible allegations of widespread misconduct have arisen that would either impact the outcome in any state or warrant a change in DOJ policy."

Correction: An earlier version of this article said a letter from Democratic attorneys general was signed by the Pennsylvania attorney general. He was not among the signers.

Undercutting Trump, Justice Dept. ends Pa. election investigation, having found 'insufficient evidence' of criminal intent

washingtonpost.com/national-security/justice-department-pennsylvania-election-investigation/2021/01/15/dcfe5274-55e3-11eb-a817-e5e7f8a406d6_story.html

By Matt Zapotosky January 15, 2021



The top federal prosecutor in Harrisburg, Pa., announced Friday that his office has closed an investigation into nine discarded ballots found in the northeastern part of the state that President Trump had touted to support his unfounded claims of election rigging, saying in a statement that the probe had found "insufficient evidence to prove criminal intent on the part of the person who discarded the ballots."

The investigation had been controversial from the start, as election law experts said the department seemed to be violating department policy and tradition in revealing an ongoing probe in such a way that could affect the election.

Though just nine ballots in a dumpster were at issue, then-U.S. Attorney David J. Freed, who oversaw prosecutors in the Middle District of Pennsylvania, announced the probe in a public statement in September soon after Trump alluded to what happened on Fox News Radio's

"The Brian Kilmeade Show." Freed also first claimed that all nine ballots were cast for Trump, though he later clarified seven of the ballots had been cast for the president and two were found sealed.

Freed is no longer the U.S. attorney in the Middle District of Pennsylvania; the closure of the case was announced by his successor, acting U.S. attorney Bruce D. Brandler.

"After a thorough investigation conducted by the FBI and prosecutors from my office, we have determined that there is insufficient evidence to prove criminal intent on the part of the person who discarded the ballots," Brandler said. "Therefore, no criminal charges will be filed and the matter is closed."

The statement gave no new details of the investigation.

Though the case drew significant attention because of its public disclosure, investigators had long been skeptical that it would produce a significant finding of wrongdoing. According to people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe nonpublic details of the case, the person who discarded the ballots was thought to have an intellectual disability. Local officials said the person was an independent contractor who was fired in the wake of the incident.

Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar, Pennsylvania's top elections official, had said in September that it was "a bad error" but added, "This was not intentional fraud."

Justice Department policies and tradition generally call for prosecutors to avoid taking public steps in cases that could affect a political race so close to an election, even in cases of voter fraud. When Freed announced the case, election law experts said he seemed to be trampling on those policies — and, even worse, seemed to be doing so in support of the president. After the November election, then-Attorney General William P. Barr controversially relaxed those guidelines in instances when the wrongdoing could change the result.

Soon after Freed issued his statement, a Trump campaign spokesman wrote in a tweet, "Democrats are trying to steal the election." The post was later deleted. Trump had seemed to refer to the case publicly even before the Justice Department's announcement, responding to a question on Kilmeade's show about his refusal to commit to a peaceful transfer of power.

"I think we have a long way before we get there," Trump said. "These ballots are a horror show. They found six ballots in an office yesterday in a garbage can. They were Trump ballots — eight ballots in an office yesterday in — but in a certain state and they were — they had Trump written on it, and they were thrown in a garbage can."

The next day, it was revealed Barr had personally told Trump about the matter.

Federal prosecutors assigned to monitor election malfeasance tell Barr they see no evidence of substantial irregularities

washingtonpost.com/national-security/william-barr-election-memo/2020/11/13/6ed06d20-25e4-11eb-a688-5298ad5d580a_story.html

By Matt Zapotosky and Tom Hamburger November 13, 2020



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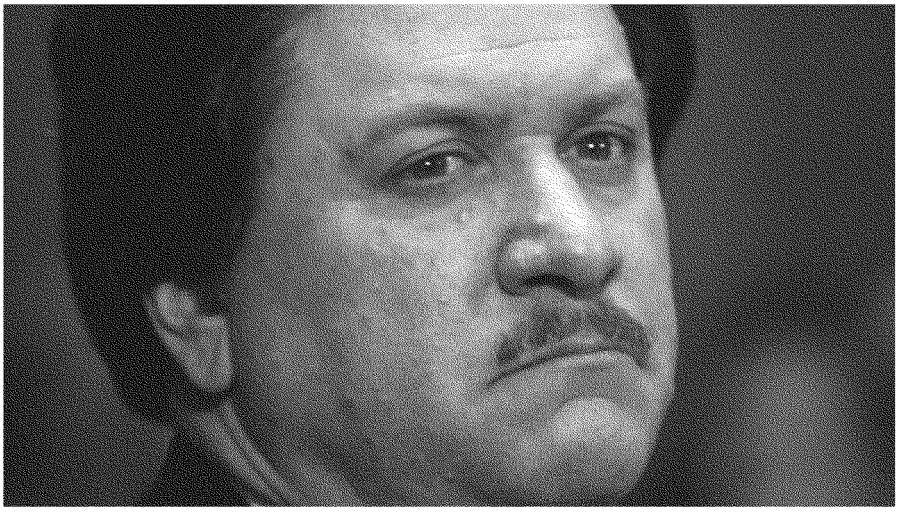
Trump campaign lawyer stirs outrage by saying ex-cyber chief should be 'taken out at dawn and shot'

usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/12/01/trump-campaign-lawyer-digenova-says-ex-cyber-chief-should-shot/6475099002/



Matthew Brown, USA TODAY Published 9:17 a.m. ET Dec. 1, 2020 | Updated 2:13 p.m. ET Dec. 1, 2020



President Trump has fired Chris Krebs, the head of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. CISA is tasked with protecting elections from cyberattacks. Video Elephant

An attorney for the Trump campaign said the federal government's former top cybersecurity chief should be "shot" for describing the U.S. election as secure.

Joe diGenova condemned Christopher Krebs, former director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, on Monday's episode of "The Howie Carr Show."

"That guy is a class A moron," diGenova said. "He should be drawn and quartered, taken out at dawn and shot."

The comments were syndicated on Carr's radio show, as well as aired on the cable channel Newsmax.

Trump fired Krebs last month after the Homeland Security agency declared that the general election was the most secure in U.S. history.

That statement contradicted Trump, who has pushed unsubstantiated allegations of voting fraud while his legal team seeks to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's win.

Krebs was fired almost two weeks after the election for casting aspersions on the president's claims. Trump called Krebs' statement about election security "highly inaccurate."

During an interview on NBC's "Today," Krebs, who received a flood of criticism from Trump allies, said diGenova's comments were "certainly more dangerous language."

"The way I look at it is we are a nation of laws. I feel like I have an exceptional team of lawyers who win in court, and I think they're probably going to be busy," Krebs said.

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https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/12/01/trump-campaign-lawyer-digenova-says-ex-cyber-chief-should-shot/6475099002/

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Snapchat permanently bans Trump

politico.com/news/2021/01/13/snapchat-permanently-bans-donald-trump-459147

Snapchat permanently banned President Donald Trump from its platform on Wednesday.

"In the interest of public safety, and based on his attempts to spread misinformation, hate speech, and incite violence, which are clear violations of our guidelines, we have made the decision to permanently terminate his account," a company spokesperson said in a statement to POLITICO.

The move finalizes an indefinite suspension of Trump's account that Snapchat had issued last week.

The company emphasized that its primary use is between close friends, unlike the vast, public platforms on apps such as Facebook and Twitter. Snapchat stopped promoting Trump's content on its Discover platform back in June, further limiting his reach to those who followed or searched for him.

A number of social media networks have ousted the president from their platforms since last week's deadly attack on the Capitol by Trump's supporters. Twitter and Facebook both put temporary suspensions on the president's accounts shortly after, and Twitter permanently banned Trump on Friday, costing the president access to his preferred medium of communicating with the broader public.

Trump, along with a chorus of his Republican allies, has decried his suspensions as part of an "unprecedented assault on free speech," with many conservatives likening them to George Orwell's "1984."

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Snapchat's ban.

Insurrection At The Capitol: Live Updates

npr.org/sections/insurrection-at-the-capitol/2021/01/09/955289141/as-inauguration-nears-concern-grows-of-more-violence-to-come;https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/10/us/inauguration-security-police.html

As Inauguration Nears, Concern Of More Violence Grows

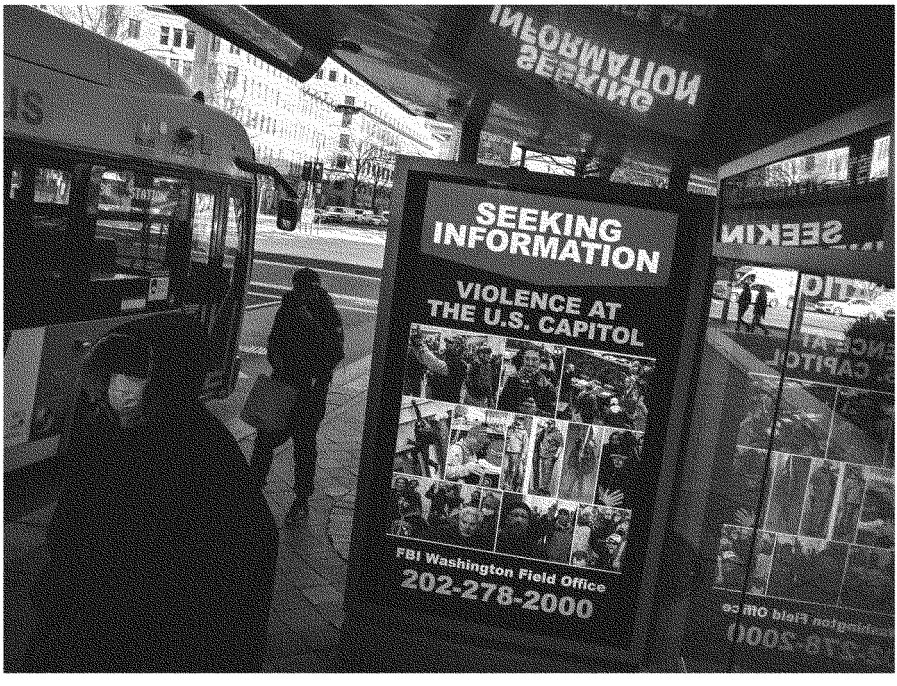
January 9, 20214:49 PM ET

Matthew S. Schwartz



Twitter
Enlarge this image
At a bus stop on Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest in Washington, D.C., a notice from the FBI seeks information about people pictured during the riot at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday. **Al Drago/Getty Images hide caption**

toggle caption
Al Drago/Getty Images



At a bus stop on Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest in Washington, D.C., a notice from the FBI seeks information about people pictured during the riot at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday.

Al Drago/Getty Images

The violence at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday was unprecedented in modern U.S. history — but some pro-Trump extremists are promising it was just a taste of things to come.

"Many of Us will return on January 19, 2021, carrying Our weapons, in support of Our nation's resolve, towhich [sic] the world will never forget!!!" one person wrote on Parler, a site friendly to right-wing extremists. "We will come in numbers that no standing army or police agency can match."

That post was one of dozens spotted by the Alethea Group, which tracks online threats and disinformation. Various virtual fliers circulating on social media promise an "armed march" on Capitol Hill and in every state capital a few days before the inauguration. Other posts promise violence on Inauguration Day itself. One post encourages supporters to meet in D.C. specifically to prevent President-elect Joe Biden from entering the White House.

It's unclear how serious the threats of more violence are, but the continued determination of the president's most die-hard supporters to fight what they incorrectly perceive as an unfair election has some members of Congress wondering: Will the insurrection continue? And how can they stop it?

"What happened on Jan. 6, this past Wednesday, might not be the end of the insurrection, but the beginning," Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi of Illinois told NPR's *Weekend Edition*.

"We need to be concerned," said Krishnamoorthi, a Democrat who is a member of the House Intelligence committee. Krishnamoorthi says he didn't anticipate how large the crowd outside the Capitol would become or that "the president would incite this mob to march on the Capitol to 'go wild' and instigate the insurrection."

"But we, at this point, have to be wiser to what's possible — and we have to prepare accordingly," he said. "Our democracy will be OK; we just have to defend the Constitution and our country at all costs, at this point."

The Washington Post reports that FBI agents are investigating whether some of the Capitol rioters intended not just to disrupt the certification of the Electoral College votes, but also to capture or kill lawmakers. "Tell Pelosi we're coming for that [expletive]!" one rioter screamed at law enforcement. Others chanted, "Hang Mike Pence!"

Five people died in Wednesday's violence, including a Capitol police officer. And Krishnamoorthi is just one of several lawmakers who worry about what might be coming next.



What We Know About The Capitol Police Officer Who Died

Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, warned Saturday that he was notified of a "disturbing report of a death threat" received Friday by the Iowa Democratic Party. "Threats like this & violence are UNACCEPTABLE," he tweeted.

The likelihood of more violence is one of the reasons Twitter permanently suspended President Trump's account. "Plans for future armed protests have already begun proliferating on and off-Twitter, including a proposed secondary attack on the US Capitol and state capitol buildings on January 17, 2021," Twitter wrote.

Twitter was particularly concerned by a Trump tweet indicating he wouldn't attend the inauguration. That message "may also serve as encouragement to those potentially considering violent acts that the Inauguration would be a 'safe' target."

Although plans for more armed demonstrations are generally in their early stages, the potential for violence is very real, Alethea Group says. "We're in a tinderbox situation right now," Alethea Group's vice president of analysis, Cindy Otis, told NPR. "Communities online that either participated in Wednesday's violence or supported it are threatening that it was only the beginning of what they have long claimed is an inevitable civil war or revolution."

Otis, a former CIA analyst, says that extremist groups were likely encouraged by seeing how relatively easy it seemed to be to overtake the Capitol building — and how close participants were able to get to political officials whom they see as enemies.

"One would hope that a siege on the Capitol building planned and organized in public view would inspire more preparation by the relevant agencies," she added.

Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, told CNN that the group was seeing online "chatter" from white supremacists online who feel "emboldened" by the current moment. "We fully expect that this violence could actually get worse before it gets better," he said.

Some state legislatures are also concerned about the potential for violence. In the wake of the Capitol insurrection, Florida lawmakers have proposed a measure that would increase penalties for people arrested during a violent protest.

"If you injure a police officer during that period of time, you will go to jail for at least six months," Florida House of Representatives Speaker Chris Sprowls told Fox News. "If you are arrested during an aggravated riot situation, you will spend the night in jail."

Despite heightened security concerns, Biden still plans to be inaugurated on the steps of the Capitol on Jan. 20. "We are confident in our security partners who have spent months planning and preparing for the inauguration, and we are continuing to work with them to ensure the utmost safety and security of the president-elect," a senior Biden inauguration official told *The Washington Post*.

- Capitol building attack
- insurrection

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

The Capitol mob desecrated a historical workplace — and left behind some disturbing artifacts

By **Maura Judkis** and **Ellen McCarthy**

Jan. 8, 2021 at 7:17 p.m. EST

It was after the House had reconvened Wednesday night, and after Rep. Andy Kim (D-N.J.) had voted to certify the Arizona vote for President-elect Joe Biden, that he decided to take a walk. He exited the House chamber through doors with bashed-out glass windows. He walked to the middle of the Rotunda and looked around at the remnants of the riot that had engulfed the Capitol hours earlier. There were American flags and splinters of historic furniture scattered with gloves and cigarette butts and the powdery residue left behind by fire extinguishers. The meaningful mixed with the mundane.

Kim was overwhelmed with sadness at the desecration of what he considers the most beautiful building in the country. "Under that great dome was just ransacked, just garbage and debris everywhere, all of it all over the statues, all over the floor," he says. "It was really painful to see this room and this building that I love so much hurting."

So he got a trash bag, and started to pick it up.

He cleaned up car keys, and Trump flags, and water bottles — as well as some alarming items such as body armor. There were some police posted nearby. "I asked the officers if it was theirs, and they said no," says Kim. He says he found a manufacture date on the armor: It had been bought just weeks earlier, as if for this very occasion.

Kim kept cleaning. He cleaned the Rotunda, Statuary Hall, the crypt. It was 1 a.m. The litter was a testament to the violence. "There was some metal furniture that was broken, which was pretty amazing to me," he says. "These are like, metal benches that were just broken to pieces."

A lot of things were broken to pieces, or pilfered, or defaced. Windows and door frames. The placard above House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's door. Camera equipment owned by the Associated Press. A photo of the late congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis, with a quote about the necessity of getting into "good trouble," that had stood on an easel outside of the office of House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.).

The office of the Senate parliamentarian was ransacked. A bust of President Zachary Taylor was smeared with what appeared to be blood.

Missing: Laptops from the offices of Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Pelosi and others. Mail. Paperwork. Records that the Department of Justice referred to cryptically as "national security equities."

"If anyone cleaning up the Capitol (or any of the hallways we were quickly moving through) spots a blue eyeglasses case with gold-rimmed glasses in them — let me know," tweeted PBS correspondent Lisa Desjardins.

Seven pieces of historically significant art were covered in "corrosive gas agent residue," according to a spokesperson for the Committee on House Administration, which has oversight over the House curator and the Architect of the Capitol. Those gas-doused artifacts — including a marble statue of Thomas Jefferson, marble busts of House speakers Joseph Gurney Cannon, Joseph W. Martin Jr., Thomas Brackett Reed and Champ Clark and portraits of James Madison and John Quincy Adams — were being sent to the Smithsonian for assessment and restoration. A 19th-century gold mirror in Speaker Pelosi's office was smashed and will be repaired, per the spokesperson.

"On the West Front, the teams identified graffiti on the building near the Inaugural Stands and two broken Olmsted light fixtures," said a spokeswoman for the Architect of the Capitol in an email. "Statues, murals, historic benches and original shutters all suffered varying degrees of damage – primarily from pepper spray accretions and residue from tear gas and fire extinguishers – that will require cleaning and conservation."

The Capitol is a place of business but also a museum. When a window has been broken, a replacement can't just be ordered from Home Depot. "All original materials will be used in repairs where possible," said the spokeswoman.

During the riot, precious artifacts were paraded around as props and prizes. A Florida man in a ski cap made off with the House speaker's lectern. A photograph of the man with his quarry quickly became iconic, a symbol of the mob's audacity in taking what they wanted without bothering to hide their identities. (The Bradenton [Fla.] Herald later identified the man as 36-year-old Adam Christian Johnson, a furniture maker and stay-at-home dad.) A listing for the lectern briefly appeared on eBay, commanding bids of at least $56,000 before it was taken down. ("Stolen items are illegal and not allowed on eBay," a company spokeswoman said in an email.) The postings were a hoax: The lectern, as well as a gavel, were recovered undamaged, reported the spokesperson for the Committee on House Administration.

The Antiquities Trafficking and Heritage Anthropology Research (ATHAR) Project kept a lookout online for rioters' stolen "souvenirs." Katie Paul, the group's co-director, says she saw postings for the lectern on Facebook Marketplace, where the sale of stolen goods is prohibited.

"Especially with federal charges coming, people are likely going to want to get this material out of their possession," says Paul. "But it also is going to be worth money, particularly since it's now from a historical event."

Because of the historic nature of the Capitol riot, the mob not only destroyed historically important artifacts but created them. As cleanup crews tended to the Capitol's exterior on Thursday, another type of worker was sifting through the mess for salvageable items. Frank Blazich, a curator from the National Museum of American History collected signs and other ephemera from the scene outside. Among the objects: a sign that read, "Off with their heads: Stop the steal." Other leavings, including pro-insurrection stickers and flags found inside the Capitol, will be preserved along with artifacts like the speaker's damaged name plate in the House and Senate collections and shared with national museums, including the Smithsonians, said the Committee on House Administration spokesperson.

Jane Campbell, president of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, a nonprofit chartered by Congress to inspire " informed patriotism," says she was angry and heartbroken watching Wednesday's events unfold on television from her Capitol Hill home.

But as soon as the siege ended, Campbell switched into historian mode. Her organization is collecting first-person accounts, videos and social media posts for what will become a digital archive of the riot. She also hopes that much of the physical detritus of the day will be saved.

"As a historian I want everything preserved," Campbell says. "I think the people who did the attack on the Capitol are

insurrectionist, immoral and bad news all the way around . . . but if they left stuff behind, it should be preserved and studied later. We have to look at, 'What did we learn?'"

Many members of the Capitol's janitorial staff are people of color, and it did not go unnoticed by people scrolling through photos of the destruction online that Black and Latino custodians — plus one first-generation Korean American congressman — were the ones picking up a mess left behind by a mostly White group that included, among others, a man carrying a gigantic Confederate flag.

That didn't enter Rep. Kim's thoughts until later. He thought of his parents, and how they came to this country.

"When I see the Capitol defaced, I see the values and the opportunities that gave my family a chance in this country disrespected," he says. "This building is bigger than all of us. It deserves our respect."

Updated January 17, 2021

Complete coverage: Pro-Trump mob storms Capitol building

Security

Live updates: State capitols, D.C. brace for potentially violent protests

Arrests: Here are some of the people charged

What happened on Jan. 6

Video timeline: 41 minutes of fear from inside the Capitol siege

Police turning in police: Off-duty police were part of the Capitol mob

Exclusive: Capitol Police intelligence report warned three days before attack that 'Congress itself' could be targeted

Attacked with bear spray and their own batons: D.C. police describe brutal and chaotic moments

Trump's second impeachment

Unprecedented: House hands Trump a second impeachment, this time with GOP support

Senate impeachment whip count: Where Democrats and Republicans stand

How much did Mike Pence know about pressure on Ukraine? Testimony suggests effort to flag concerns

usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/12/01/impeachment-inquiry-how-much-did-mike-pence-know-ukraine-concerns/4307439002/



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How much did Mike Pence know about pressure on Ukraine? Testimony suggests effort to flag concerns

When Mike Pence and Volodymyr Zelensky met in a windowless conference room, the stalled aid was the first issue the Ukraine president raised.

Maureen Groppe, USA TODAY Published 4:17 p.m. ET Dec. 1, 2019 | Updated 6:23 p.m. ET Dec. 3, 2019

U.S. and Ukraine relations go further back than the now infamous phone call between Trump and Zelensky. We explain their relationship. USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – As the White House scrambled in late August to swap Vice President Mike Pence into a preplanned presidential trip to Poland, there was one meeting Pence was adamant stay on the schedule: a sit-down with Ukraine's new president.

Nearly $400 million in U.S. military assistance that Ukraine was desperate for as a counter to Russian aggression had been on hold for weeks.

When Pence and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met Sept. 1 in a windowless conference room of the Marriott in downtown Warsaw, the stalled aid was the first issue a frustrated Zelensky raised.

Pence, surrounded by both sides' aides and Cabinet members, did not specifically discuss with Zelensky the reasons behind the hold, according to testimony in House Democrats' impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump's dealings with Ukraine. Instead, Pence assured Zelensky that the United States was fully behind Ukraine and that he would talk to Trump to try to get the assistance released.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky greets Vice President Mike Pence in Warsaw, Poland, on Sept. 1, 2019. (Photo: Petr David Josek, AP)

It was diplomat Gordon Sondland who, in an anteroom with a senior Ukrainian official after the formal meeting, relayed that Ukraine could boost efforts to unfreeze the money if officials would announce an investigation into Burisma, the Ukrainian energy company that Hunter Biden worked for when his father, Joe Biden, was vice president.

Sondland also testified that, in a briefing he joined at the last minute before the Zelenksy meeting, he told Pence he was concerned the delay in aid had become tied to investigations Trump wanted.

Pence has disputed Sondland's account of raising concerns about the aid. Even more, he has broadly denied knowing about the allegations at the center of the impeachment inquiry.

Still, an accumulation of public testimony, including from Sondland and other diplomats and aides, suggests heavy involvement by Pence in Ukraine generally, though no one seems to be accusing Pence of participating in or facilitating the effort to push Ukraine into taking up the investigations.

The testimony also indicates there were multiple opportunities for Pence to have been informed about the domestic political agenda being pursued in Ukraine.

House Democrats concluded in their impeachment report released Dec. 3 that Pence and other senior officials "were either knowledgeable of or active participants in an effort to extract from a foreign nation the personal political benefits sought by the president."

Pence has disputed the notion that he was in the loop, telling WISN 12 News in Wisconsin after Sondland's testimony that he was "not aware of the allegations that U.S. aid to Ukraine was tied to investigations at any point before those matters became public in September."

Pence's spokeswoman said she had nothing to add to that statement.

Impeachment report: Mike Pence at least knew of Trump efforts to pressure Ukraine

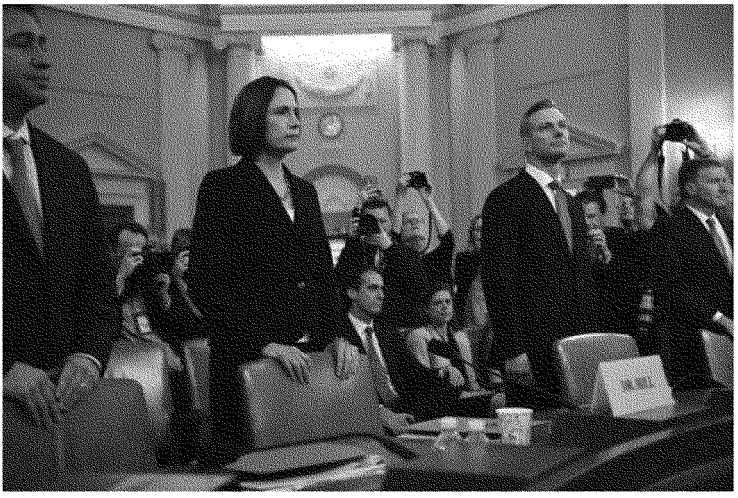
CLOSE
In riveting testimony, former White House adviser Fiona Hill told lawmakers Ambassador Gordon Sondland carried out a "domestic political errand" for President Trump on Ukraine, operating outside of official diplomatic channels. (Nov. 21) AP Domestic

Early warning on Ukraine and Rudy Giuliani

Pence's office had been warned months before by a top National Security Council official concerned that something was going on with Ukraine that appeared to involve Rudy Giuliani, the president's personal lawyer.

"I flagged to his staff, to General Kellogg that there were some issues, you know, kind of noise going on around Ukraine that was worrisome and that we'd need to get to the bottom of," former National Security Council official Fiona Hill testified about her interaction with retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, Pence's national security adviser.

Visualizing the impeachment hearings: A diagram of events in the impeachment inquiry of President Trump



National Security Council official Fiona Hill and State department official David Holmes testify before the House Intelligence Committee on Nov. 21, 2019 in a public hearing in the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump. (Photo: Jack Gruber, USA TODAY)

Kellogg and Jennifer Williams, a national security adviser on loan to Pence from the State Department, listened in on Trump's July 25 call with Zelensky in which Trump asked Zelensky to talk to Giuliani and to undertake investigations into the Bidens. A transcript of that call – which sparked the whistleblower complaint that became the center of the impeachment inquiry – was included in Pence's daily briefing book.

Williams also testified that Pence's office had been instructed by Trump not to send Pence to Zelensky's May inauguration, another detail noted in the whistleblower's complaint.

Pence's name came up during the testimony of about a dozen of the 17 people who testified during October and November either in public or in private depositions later made public, though only a handful talked in detail about their interactions with Pence regarding Ukraine.

Impeachment witnesses: Who are the 17 witnesses in the Trump impeachment inquiry and what have they said?

Trump attack: Trump dismisses Mike Pence aide Jennifer Williams as 'Never Trumper'

Mike Pence an eager player on foreign policy

Witnesses described Pence as active in foreign policy and particularly eager to be involved in Ukraine, a strategic U.S. ally at war with Russia.

Hill testified that she worked closely with Pence's team, including Kellogg and Williams.

Despite Pence's small staff, Hill said, the vice president played an important foreign policy and diplomatic role.

"Vice President Pence has been, you know, extremely good about stepping up when asked," Hill said in her initial deposition with the House intelligence committee. Pence, she also said, "wanted to play a role on Ukraine in this administration."

Hill said she tried to keep Pence's office as informed as possible and would wave red flags for meetings his team should avoid or things it needed to be aware of that could affect the integrity of the vice president and his office.

That included, she testified, sharing with Kellogg her concerns about Giuliani and the abrupt dismissal of Marie Yovanovitch from her post as U.S. ambassador to Ukraine in the spring.

"I wanted to make sure that they knew that there were issues and they should be very careful," she said.

Kellogg didn't say that he would pass Hill's concerns on to Pence but did say he would talk to his team, Hill testified.

More red flags on Ukraine

Williams testified that after Yovanovitch was recalled, she included that information in one of her regular written briefings for Pence, along with "some commentary about some of the media reports surrounding her removal."

She also flagged for Pence in May news reports about Giuliani's involvement in Ukraine.

"I certainly recognized that (Giuliani) was interested in looking into the role that former Vice President Biden's son had played on the board of a company," Williams testified.

Impeachment inquiry: Here's the evidence committees have compiled to bolster Trump impeachment case



Jennifer Williams, a foreign policy aide to Vice President Mike Pence, delivers opening remarks as she testifies on Nov. 19, 2019 before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. (Photo: Jack Gruber, USA TODAY)

David Holmes, a State Department official in the American Embassy in Kiev, testified that an associate of Zelensky told him in April that he had been contacted by "someone named Giuliani who said he was an adviser to the vice president." Holmes added, however, that the Ukrainian could have gotten the name wrong. Pence's spokeswoman said Giuliani has never been an adviser to Pence and the vice president has never spoken to Giuliani about the issue.

Pence told not to go to inauguration

After Zelensky was elected in April on promises to root out corruption in the former Soviet state and to help solve the deadly conflict with Russia, the State Department wanted Pence to attend Zelensky's inauguration, according to David Hale, the department's No. 3 official.

Pence's staff had been in the preliminary planning stages for that, still uncertain whether the May date would fit his schedule when, Williams testified, she was told by an assistant to Pence's chief of staff that Trump didn't want Pence to go.

None of the witnesses said they knew the reason behind that direction. Democrats say the timing is suspicious because it happened shortly after Giuliani claimed people around Zelensky were antagonistic to Trump.

Pence later received in his daily briefing book a transcription of Trump's July call with Zelensky, in which Trump asked his Ukrainian counterpart to "do us a favor" by investigating a theory that Ukraine had meddled in the 2016 presidential election and asked for help

investigating the Bidens.

Aides listened to Trump's call

Williams testified that the call struck her as "unusual and inappropriate." It also, she said, "shed some light on possible other motivations behind a security assistance hold."

But Williams said she didn't express concern at the time with anyone in Pence's office because her supervisor, Kellogg, also was listening in on the call and because she "knew that the vice president had access to the transcript from his briefing book that evening."

Kellogg, who has not testified, said in a statement that he "heard nothing wrong or improper on the call."

Tim Morrison, who took over for Hill at the National Security Council in July, testified that Pence is "known to be a voracious reader of his daily brief."

Pence has said he doesn't remember reading the transcript.

"But had I read it, it wouldn't matter because the president did nothing wrong," he told FOX Business Network's Trish Regan in November. "There was no quid pro quo."

Pence meets with Zelensky

When Pence subbed for Trump on the trip to Poland so the president could deal with the threat of Hurricane Dorian in the USA, Pence was eager to speak to Zelensky to convey support for him, Morrison said.

"It was really the one meeting that the vice president was adamant he take," Morrison testified.

Impeachment testimony: Read all the transcripts from the closed-door testimony

Pence brought up Trump's focus on corruption reform in Ukraine and conveyed Trump's desire that countries besides the United States also provide security assistance to Ukraine, according to Morrison.

Pence tried to encourage Zelensky, Morrison said, but "there was only so much he could say" to allay the concerns about whether the assistance would be forthcoming.

The next day, Pence didn't directly respond when asked by reporters whether he could assure Ukraine that the freeze was not related to efforts by Giuliani and others to dig up dirt on the Biden family.

He has also sidestepped the question of whether he was ever aware of those efforts, saying the question of military aid was "from my experience" not connected.

He may have been careful to keep himself removed from what Hill called the "domestic political errand" that Sondland and Giuliani were running in Ukraine while she and others were pursuing the "national security foreign policy."

When Wisconsin GOP Sen. Ron Johnson became alarmed in August after Sondland described to him some of what was going on, Johnson was urged by then-national security adviser John Bolton to raise his concerns directly with Trump and Pence. But while Johnson got Trump on the phone that day – Aug. 31 – he "was not able to schedule a call with Vice President Pence," Johnson wrote to the House intelligence committee.



This handout picture taken and released by Ukrainian presidential press-service on September 1, 2019, shows Vice President Mike Pence and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky holding talks next to their delegations in Warsaw. (Photo: STR, AFP/Getty Images)

Pence has disputed that Sondland told him in Warsaw what was happening, telling WISN 12 News he has "no recollection of any discussion with Ambassador Sondland before that meeting."

Sondland, however, didn't describe the exchange as a "discussion." He said Pence acknowledged what he had say with a nod of his head but made no comment.

"He didn't respond," Sondland said. "He just listened."

Pathway of the impeachment process: How it works, where we are

Pence not a target of impeachment inquiry

Even if Democrats leading the impeachment inquiry believe Pence is implicated, they appear to be staying squarely focused on Trump. They haven't tried to interview him and didn't issue a subpoena when Pence refused a request to turn over documents voluntarily. Instead, Rep. Adam Schiff, chairman of the Intelligence Committee, has said he views the noncooperation from the vice president and other administration officials as evidence of obstruction by the Trump administration, which itself could be an impeachable offense.

Democrats have calculated it's better to move ahead with the evidence they already have, rather than be drawn into protracted court battles with uncooperative witnesses.

"We cannot be at the mercy of the courts," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said recently.

But Jonathan Turley, a constitutional law professor at George Washington University, said Democrats' desire for speed means they're ignoring important witnesses such as those who could corroborate or disprove what Sondland testified about Pence.

"This is a largely undeveloped evidentiary record, and the Pence controversy is just one example of that," Turley said. "Individuals like Pence have little to be concerned about when the Democrats are insisting on a vote before any of these conflicts are resolved."

Pence's reputation could still take a hit in the court of public opinion.

"It strains the bonds of credulity to the breaking point to assume that Mike Pence knew nothing about any of this," said Aaron David Miller, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment who served as a State Department adviser for both Democratic and Republican administrations.

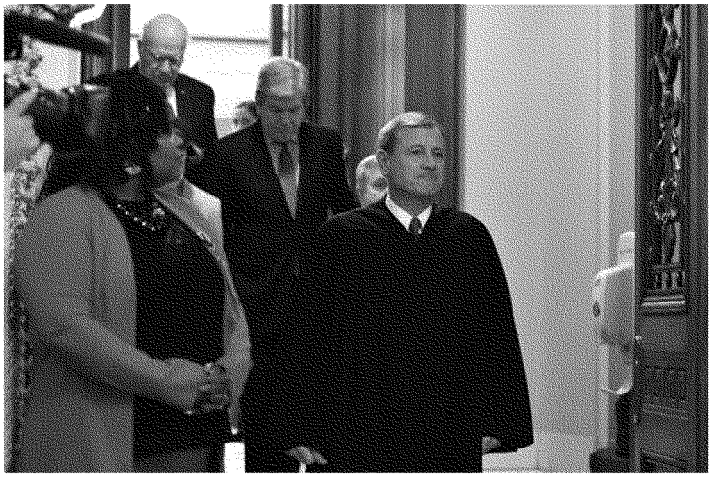
But, as always, Pence also has to worry about staying in Trump's good graces. Despite his unfailing loyalty, speculation persists that Trump could replace him on the 2020 ticket.

Trump was asked yet again about that rumor when he called into Fox & Friends the day after the intelligence committee's Ukraine hearings ended.

"Mike Pence is a great vice president," Trump said. "He's our man, 100%."

Impeachment hearings: Here are some key moments

Follow our coverage: How to stay updated on USA TODAY's impeachment coverage



US Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts walks out of the Senate chamber after the Senate impeachment vote on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC on February 5, 2020. The US Senate acquitted President Donald Trump of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress following a historic two-week trial. Mandel Ngan, AFP via Getty Images

Fullscreen



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-KY, right, walks to meet with Senate Republicans on Capitol Hill in Washington DC on Jan. 31, 2020, after the Senate voted to not allow witnesses in the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. Jacquelyn Martin, AP

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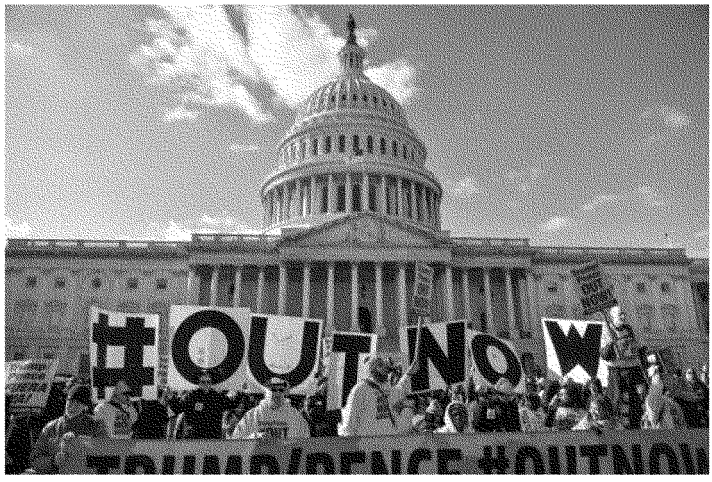

Hundreds of protesters converged on Capitol Hill speaking out that the Senate should see all documentary evidence and hear from all potential witnesses in the Senate removal trial of Donald J. Trump on Tuesday Jan. 28, 2020. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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Lev Parnas walks in front of the United States Capitol on the day he received a ticket from Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer to watch the Senate removal trial of Donald J. Trump on Tuesday Jan. 28, 2020. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



U.S. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) speaks to members of the media during a break of the Senate impeachment trial against President Donald Trump at the U.S. Capitol Jan. 29, 2020 in Washington, DC. The trial moves to its first part of the 16-hour Q&A session today. Alex Wong, Getty Images

Fullscreen



Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) speaks to members of the press at the Capitol Building during the Senate impeachment trial of President Donald Trump at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 29, 2020 in Washington, DC. In the next phase of the trial, senators will have the opportunity to submit written questions to the House managers and President Trump's defense team. Zach Gibson, Getty Images

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Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., center, walks with aides to the Senate chamber after a break in the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump at the U.S. Capitol Wednesday Jan 29, 2020, in Washington. Steve Helber, AP

Fullscreen



A Senate page brings the first question to presiding officer Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts from the majority to read during the impeachment trial against President Donald Trump in the Senate at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020. Senate Television via AP

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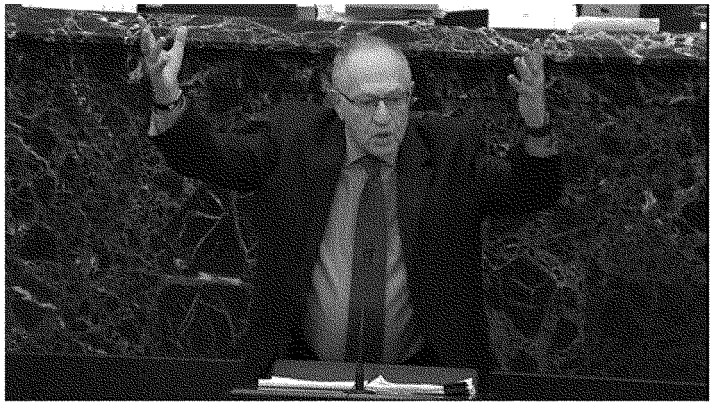

Alan Dershowitz, an attorney for President Donald Trump, answers a question during the impeachment trial against Trump in the Senate at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020. Senate Television via AP

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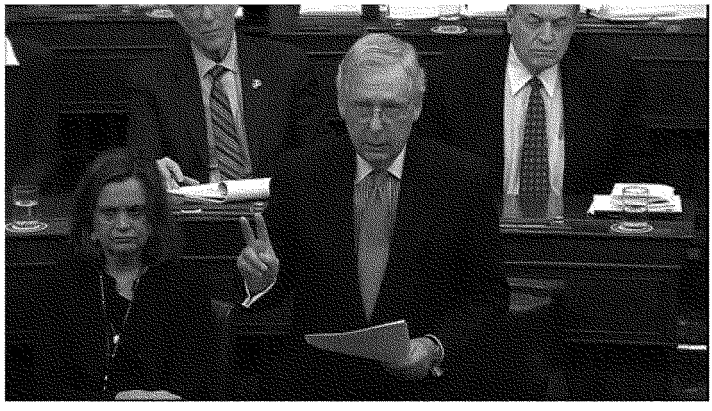

In this image from video, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., speaks during the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 28, 2020. Senate Television via AP

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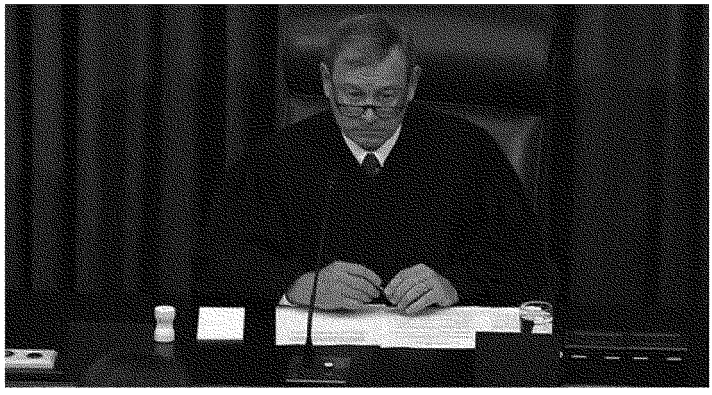

This still image taken from a US Senate webcast shows US Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts presides in the Senate Chamber at the US Capitol on Jan. 28, 2020 in Washington, DC. - US President Donald Trump's lawyers urged the US Senate Tuesday to reject the charges against him Tuesday, closing their impeachment defense by accusing the Democrats of placing him on trial for political reasons. HO, AFP via Getty Images

Fullscreen



In this image from video, personal attorney to President Donald Trump, Jay Sekulow, speaks during the impeachment trial against President Donald Trump in the Senate at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2020. Senate Television via AP

Fullscreen



Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, talks to a reporter in a Senate subway car as she leaves the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2020. Manuel Balce Ceneta, AP

Fullscreen



Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) speaks to reporters in the Senate subway following the conclusion of President Donald Trumps defense teams argument on the seventh day of the Senate impeachment trial of the President on Jan. 28, 2020 in Washington, DC. With both sides having presented their arguments the trial now moves to the phase where Senators may ask questions via written cards that are read allowed by Chief Justice John Roberts. Samuel Corum, Getty Images

Fullscreen



Republican Senator from Alaska Lisa Murkowski, left, and Democratic Senator from West Virginia Joe Manchin after adjourning during the second week of the impeachment trial of US President Donald J. Trump in the Senate at the US Capitol in Washington, DC on Jan. 28, 2020. President Trump's defense team concluded their presentation. EPA-EFE/ERIK S. LESSER ORG XMIT: ELX27 ERIK S. LESSER, EPA-EFE

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Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-KY, walks to the Senate chamber at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 22, 2020 in Washington, DC. The second day of the impeachment trial against U.S. President Donald Trump took place on Jan. 22, 2020. Win McNamee, Getty Images

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Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., talks to reporters outside the Senate Chamber at the Capitol in Washington, Jan. 21, 2020. Julio Cortez, AP

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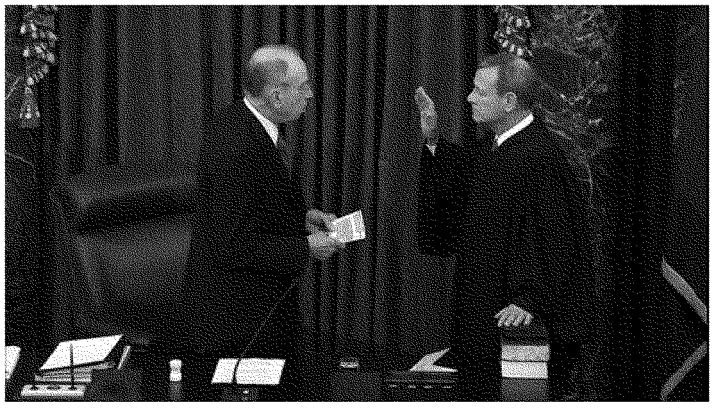

In this image from video, President Pro Tempore of the Senate Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa., swears in Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts as the presiding officer for the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump in the Senate at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Jan. 16, 2020. Senate Television via AP

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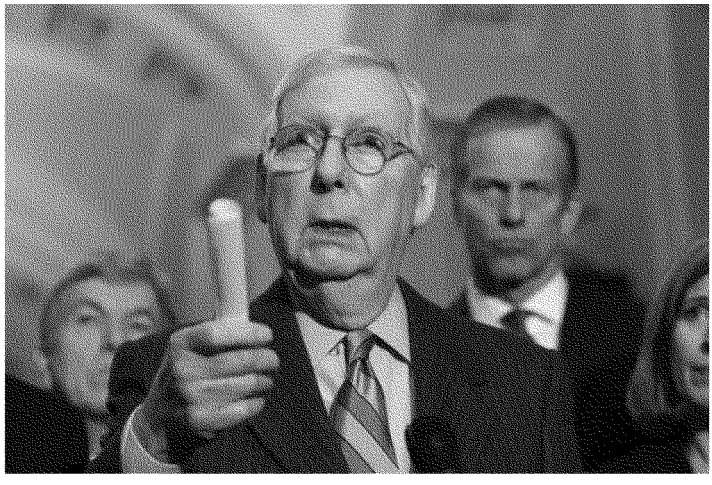

Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell speaks to the media about the upcoming Senate impeachment trial on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, Jan. 14, 2020. MICHAEL REYNOLDS, EPA-EFE

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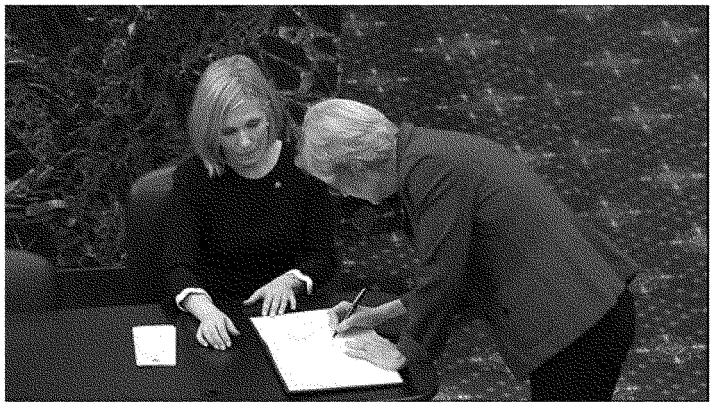

In this image from video, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., signs the oath book after being sworn in for the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump in the Senate at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Jan. 16, 2020. All senators were sworn in. Senate Television via AP

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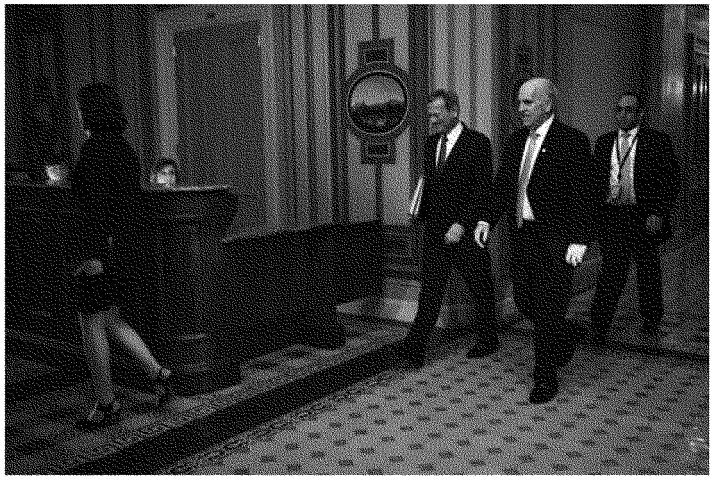

U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, left, arrives at the U.S. Capitol to be sworn in on Jan. 16, 2020 in Washington DC. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



House Impeachment Managers, led by the House Clerk and the House Sergeant at Arms walk through the Capitol Rotunda to present the articles to the Senate on jan. 15, 2020. The following morning, on Jan. 16, Rep. Adam Schiff read the articles of impeachment on the Senate floor. Jasper Colt, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., announces the impeachment managers at the Capitol in Washington on Jan. 15, 2020. Pelosi named seven people as managers: Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif.; Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y.; and Reps. Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y.; Val Demings, D-Fla.; Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif.; Jason Crow, D-Colo.; and Sylvia Garcia, D-Texas. Schiff was named the lead manager. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi strikes the gavel after announcing the passage of article II of impeachment against President Donald Trump, Dec. 18, 2019, on Capitol Hill in Washington. Patrick Semansky, AP

Fullscreen



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), center, joins House Leadership including Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler (D-NY), third from left, and House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, left, at a press conference on Dec. 18, 2019 following the vote by House of Representatives on the articles of impeachment against Donald J. Trump. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-CA, holds hands with Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-MI, as they walk to the chamber where the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives begins a day of debate on the impeachments charges against President Donald Trump for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress, at the Capitol in Washington D.C. on Dec. 18, 2019. J. Scott Applewhite, AP

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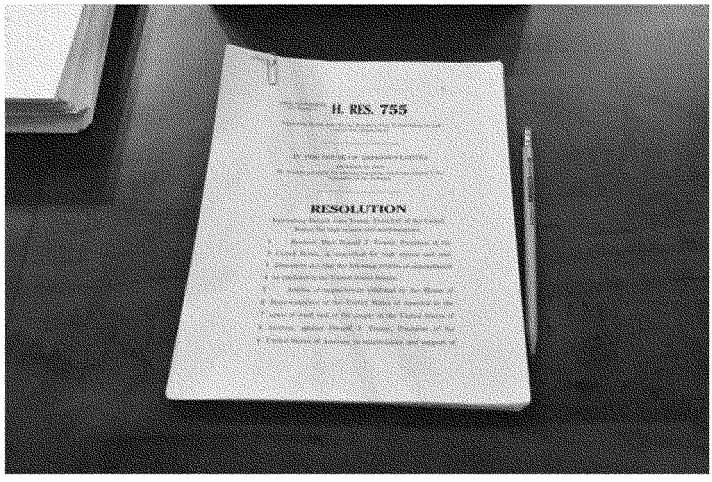

A printed copy of H.Res. 755, Articles of Impeachment Against President Donald J. Trump is seen on a table as the House Judiciary Committee continues debate to markup the Articles of Impeachment Against President Donald J. Trump in Washington, DC on Dec. 12, 2019. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



President Donald Trump rails against journalists asking questions about an impeachment inquiry during a joint news conference with Finnish President Sauli Niinisto in the East Room of the White House on Oct. 2, 2019 in Washington, D.C. Chip Somodevilla, Getty Images

Fullscreen



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California reads a statement announcing a formal impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on Sept. 24, 2019. Andrew Harnik, AP

Fullscreen



Ukraine President-elect Volodymyr Zelensky shows an ancient Bulava (historic symbol of the state power) during his inauguration in the Ukrainian parliament in Kiev, Ukraine, on May 20, 2019. The whistleblower complaint alleges that during a July 25, 2019, phone call President Donald Trump "sought to pressure the Ukrainian leader to take actions to help the President's 2020 reelection bid." SERGEY DOLZHENKO, EPA-EFE

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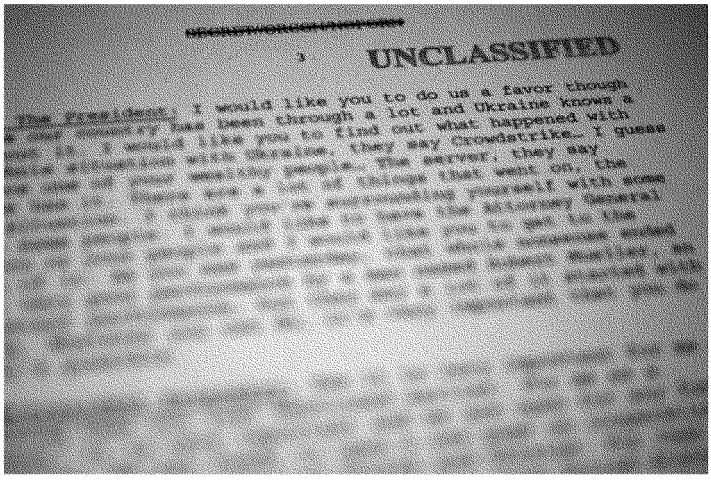

The White House released on Sept. 25, 2019, a memorandum of the phone call, one day after Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., announced a formal impeachment inquiry due to a whistleblower complaint regarding the call. Alex Wong, Getty Images

Fullscreen



During the July 25, 2019, call with Trump, Zelensky said "We are ready to continue to cooperate for the next steps specifically we are almost ready to buy more Javelins from the United States for defense purposes." According to the whistleblower complaint, "on July 18, an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) official informed Departments and Agencies that the President 'earlier that month' had issued instructions to suspend all U.S. security assistance to Ukraine." Seen here, Australian Army soldiers fire a Javelin anti-tank missile during Exercise Chong Ju at the Puckapunyal Military Area on May 9, 2019 in Seymour, Australia. Scott Barbour, Getty Images

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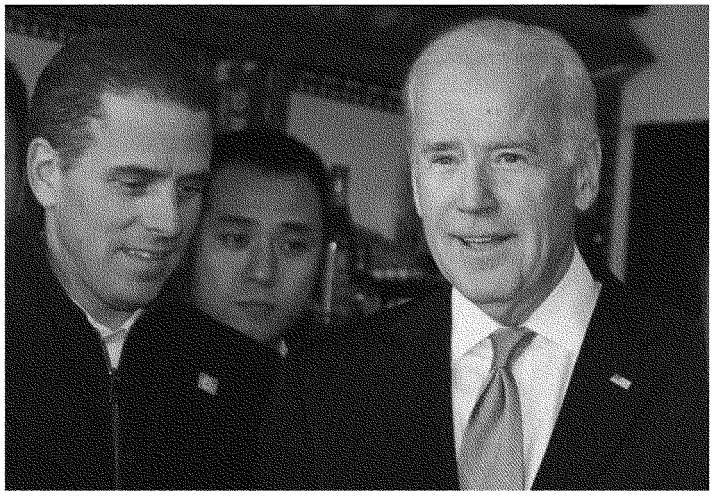

The whistleblower alleges that Trump had demanded Ukrainian investigations into Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden's business involvement in Ukraine. Seen here, then U.S. Vice President Joe Biden tours a Hutong alley with his son Hunter Biden in Beijing, China, on Dec. 5, 2013. POOL PHOTO BY ANDY WONG

Fullscreen



Joseph Maguire, acting Director of National Intelligence, testifies about his decision to not share a whistleblower complaint in front of the House Select Committee on Intelligence on Sept. 26, 2019 in Washington, D.C. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



Secretary of State Mike Pompeo meets the media in Rome on Oct. 2, 2019. Pompeo confirmed that he was on the telephone call between Trump and the Ukrainian president that is the subject of an impeachment inquiry. "I was on the phone call," Pompeo told reporters in Rome. Andrew Medichini, AP

Fullscreen



In the July 25 telephone call conversation with Zelensky, Trump refers to Attorney General William Barr and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani several times. Seen here, President Trump hands over the podium to Attorney General William Barr while participating in an announcement on U.S. citizenship and the census in Washington, D.C., on July 11, 2019. MICHAEL REYNOLDS, EPA-EFE

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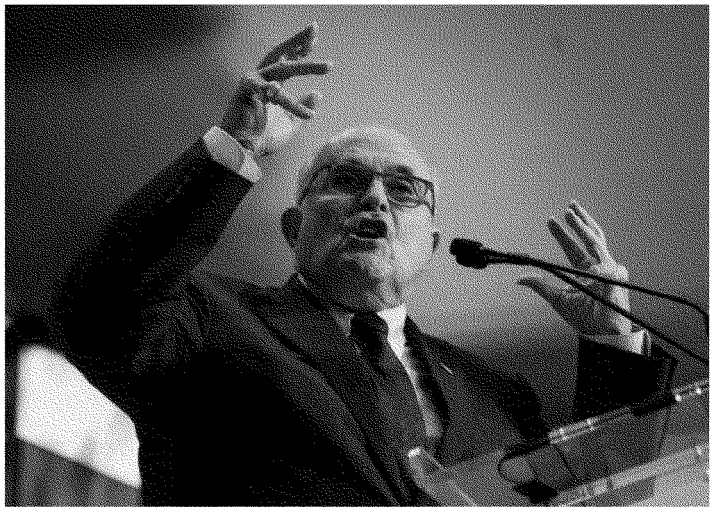

Central to the investigation is the effort by Giuliani to have Ukraine conduct a corruption probe into Joe Biden and his son's dealings with a Ukrainian energy company. Trump echoed that request in the July 25, 2019, call with Ukraine's president. Giuliani says he'd only cooperate with the House impeachment inquiry if his client agreed. In this May 5, 2018, file photo, Rudy Giuliani speaks at an event in Washington. Andrew Harnik, AP

Fullscreen



Trump and Zelensky met in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 25, 2019. SAUL LOEB, AFP/Getty Images

Fullscreen



Zelensky, left, shakes hands with Vice President Mike Pence in Warsaw, Poland on Sept. 1, 2019. A Washinton Post article published on Oct. 2, 2019, reported Trump used Pence in his attempt to pressure the new Ukrainian president to dig up dirt on Joe Biden, but is not conclusive on how much Pence knew about Trump's efforts. Petr David Josek, AP

Fullscreen



Zelensky shakes hands with Secretary of Energy Rick Perry following Zelensky's inauguration ceremony on May 20, 2019, in Kiev, Urkraine. The whistleblower complaint alleges that Trump instructed Pence to cancel his plans to attend Zelensky's May 20 inauguration. Perry went instead. Mykola Lazarenko, Ukrainian Presidential Press Service

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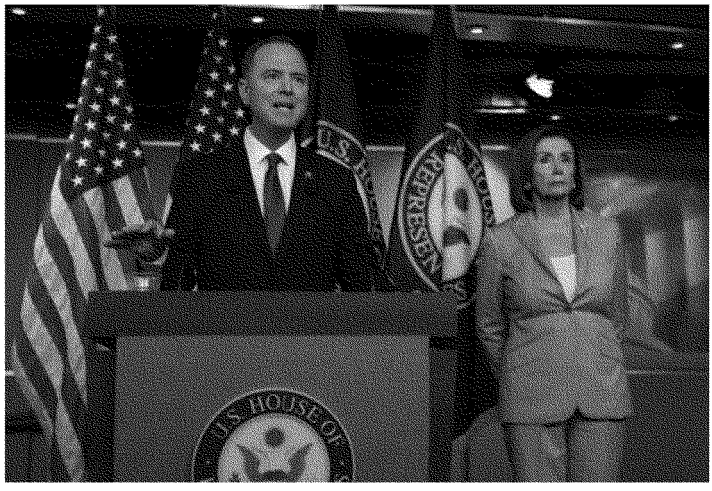

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., joins Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., right, at a news conference as House Democrats move on depositions in the impeachment inquiry of Trump, at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 2, 2019. J. Scott Applewhite/Associated Press

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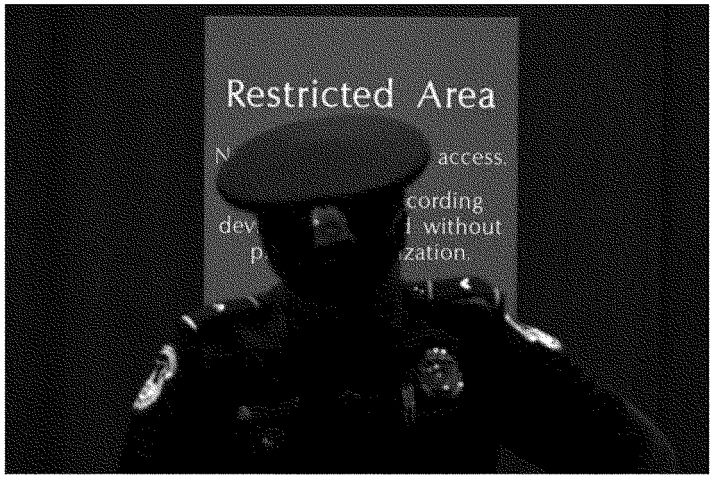

A U.S. Capitol Police officer stands at the entrance to a secure area during closed-door interviews with Kurt Volker, a former special envoy to Ukraine, as House Democrats proceed with the impeachment investigation of President Donald Trump, at the Capitol in Washington, Oct. 3, 2019. Jose Luis Magana, AP

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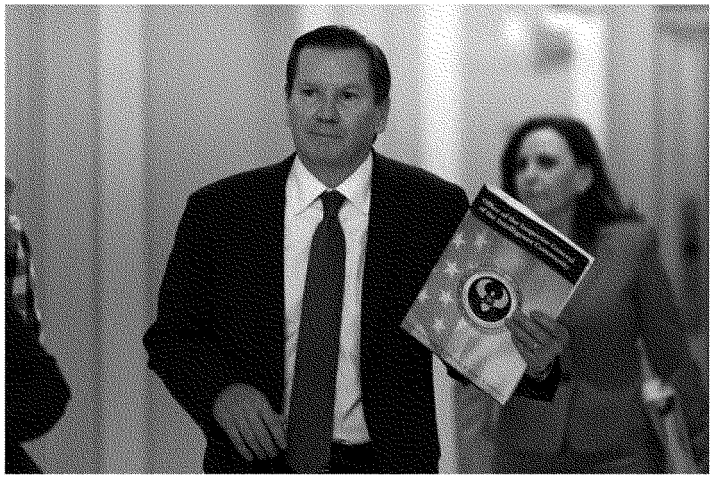

Michael Atkinson, the inspector general of the intelligence community, arrives at the Capitol where he will go behind closed doors to be questioned about the whistleblower complaint that exposed a July phone call the president had with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in which Trump pressed for an investigation of Democratic political rival Joe Biden and his family, at the Capitol in Washington, Oct. 4, 2019. J. Scott Applewhite, AP

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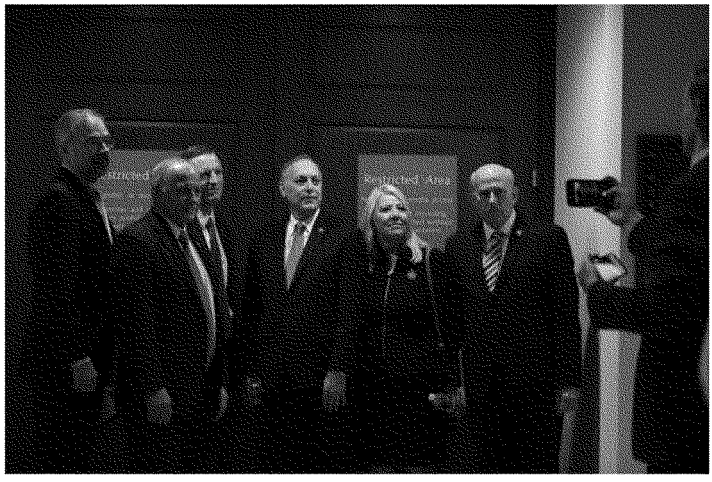

From left, Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa., Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz., Rep. Debbie Lesko, R-Ariz., and Rep. Louie Gohmert, R-Texas, pose for a group photo on Capitol Hill in Washington, Oct. 16, 2019, outside the room where people are interviewed for the impeachment inquiry. Susan Walsh, AP

Fullscreen



Kurt Volker, a former special envoy to Ukraine, leaves a closed door meeting on Capitol Hill in Washington, Oct. 16, 2019, after testifying before congressional lawmakers as part of the House impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump. Andrew Harnik, AP

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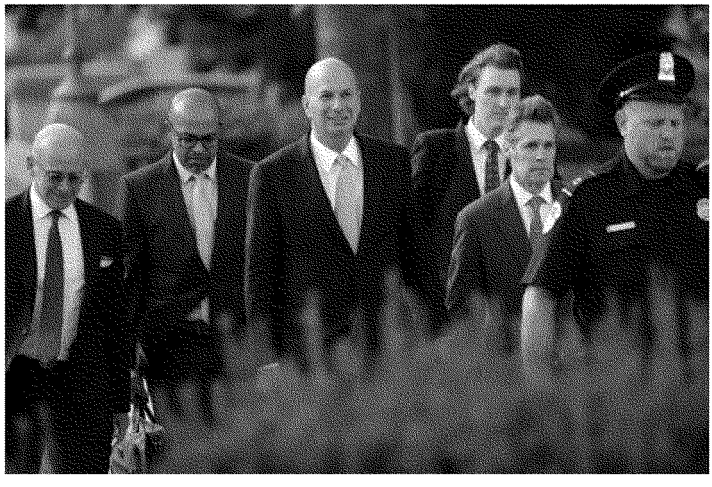

US Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland, center, arrives for a joint interview with the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and House Committee on Oversight and Reform on Capitol Hill in Washington, Oct. 17, 2019. Sondalnd told the House impeachment panel investigating President Donald Trump that he was disappointed that he had to consult with the president's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani on Ukraine policy. Pablo Martinez Monsivais, AP

Fullscreen



Supporters of President Donald Trump hold a "Stop Impeachment" rally in front of the US Capitol Oct. 17, 2019 in Washington, DC. OLIVIER DOULIERY, AFP via Getty Images

Fullscreen



Acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney answers questions during a briefing at the White House Oct. 17, 2019 in Washington, DC. Mulvaney acknowledged that aid to Ukraine at the center of a House impeachment inquiry was withheld in part because of the president's desire for the country to investigate potential corruption regarding U.S. domestic politics.
Win McNamee, Getty Images

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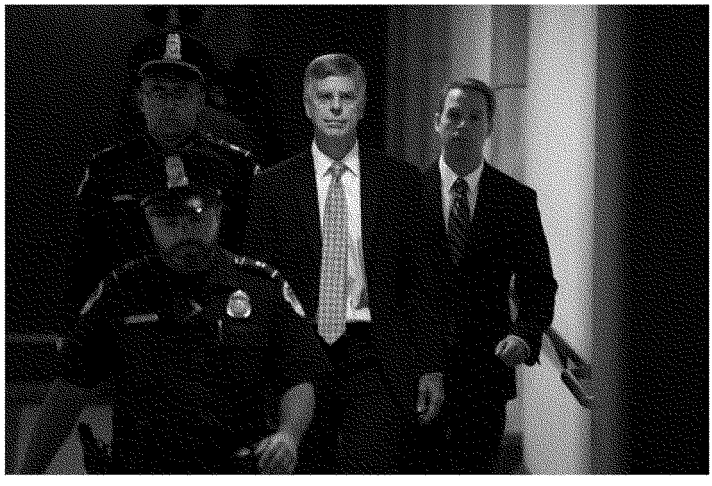

Bill Taylor, the top U.S. diplomat to Ukraine, arrives to be deposed behind closed doors amid the US House of Representatives' impeachment inquiry into President Trump, on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, Oct. 22, 2019. MICHAEL REYNOLDS, EPA-EFE

Fullscreen



House Republicans gather for a news conference after Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Laura Cooper arrived for a closed door meeting to testify as part of the House impeachment inquiry into President Trump, Oct. 23, 2019, on Capitol Hill in Washington. Patrick Semansky, AP

Fullscreen



Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., opens a door to enter a restricted area to attend the closed-door deposition of Acting Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs at the State Department, Philip Reeker (not pictured); amid the US House of Representatives' impeachment inquiry into President Trump, on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, Oct. 26, 2019. MICHAEL REYNOLDS, EPA-EFE

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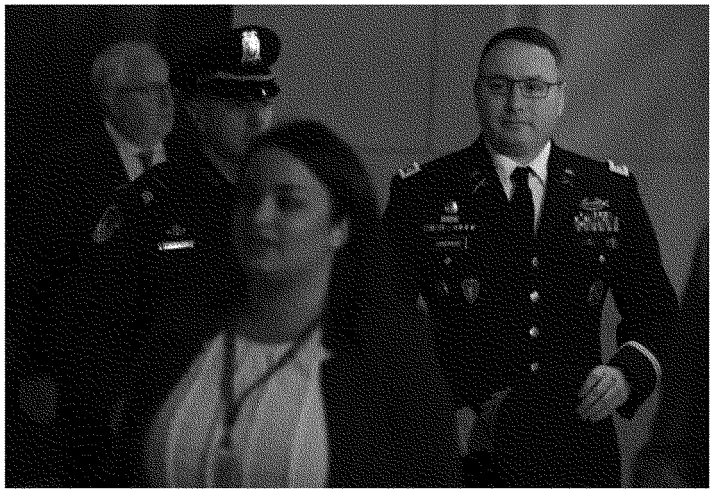

Army Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman, Director for European Affairs at the National Security Council, arrives at a closed session before the House Intelligence, Foreign Affairs and Oversight committees Oct. 29, 2019 at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC. Vindman was on Capitol Hill to testify to the committees for the ongoing impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump. Alex Wong, Getty Images

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House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif. gavels as the House votes 232-196 to pass resolution on impeachment procedure to move forward with procedures for the next phase of the impeachment inquiry into President Trump in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill in Washington, Oct. 31, 2019. The resolution would authorize the next stage of impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump, including establishing the format for open hearings, giving the House Committee on the Judiciary the final recommendation on impeachment, and allowing President Trump and his lawyers to attend events and question witnesses. Andrew Harnik, AP

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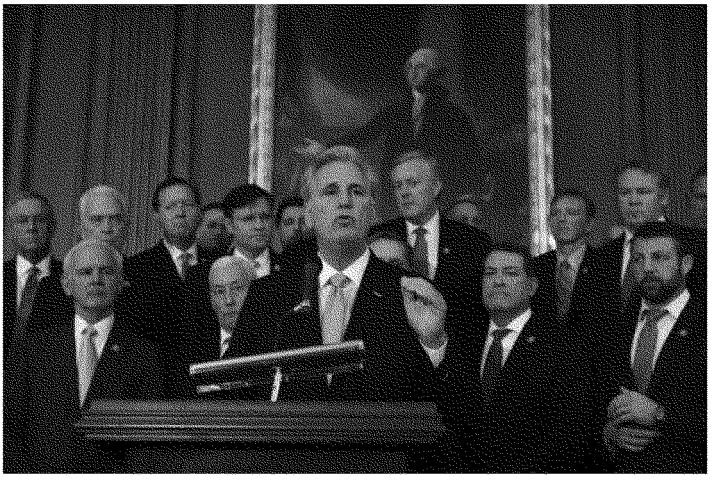

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) (C), speaks during a news conference after the close of a vote by the U.S. House of Representatives on a resolution formalizing the impeachment inquiry centered on U.S. President Donald Trump Oct. 31, 2019 in Washington, DC. The resolution, passed by a vote of 232-196, creates the legal framework for public hearings, procedures for the White House to respond to evidence and the process for consideration of future articles of impeachment by the full House of Representatives. Mark Wilson, Getty Images

Fullscreen



Activists hold a banner asking for the impeachment of President Donald Trump on Nov. 5, 2019 in front of the White House in Washington, DC. MANDEL NGAN, AFP via Getty Images

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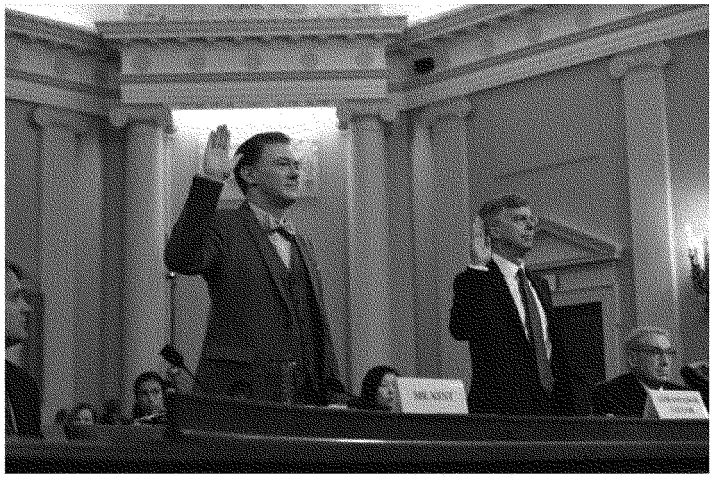

State Department Ukraine-Russia expert George Kent, left, and William B. Taylor, Jr., the top American diplomat in Ukraine are sworn in on Nov. 13, 2019 ahead of testifying before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence as the first witnesses in public congressional hearings in the impeachment inquiry into allegations President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate his political rivals. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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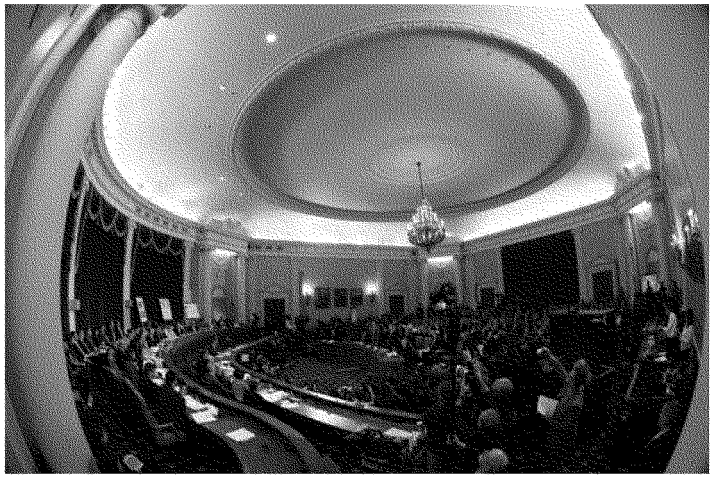

Top U.S. diplomat in Ukraine William Taylor, and career Foreign Service officer George Kent, both to the right, are sworn in before they testify before the House Intelligence Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, Nov. 13, 2019, during the first public impeachment hearing of President Donald Trump's efforts to tie U.S. aid for Ukraine to investigations of his political opponents. Committee members are seated left. Pool Photo by Alex Brandon

Fullscreen



Top U.S. diplomat in Ukraine William Taylor, left, and Career Foreign Service officer George Kent are sworn in prior to testifying before the House Intelligence Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, Nov. 13, 2019, during the first public impeachment hearing of President Donald Trump's efforts to tie U.S. aid for Ukraine to investigations of his political opponents. Pool Photo by Jim Lo Scalzo

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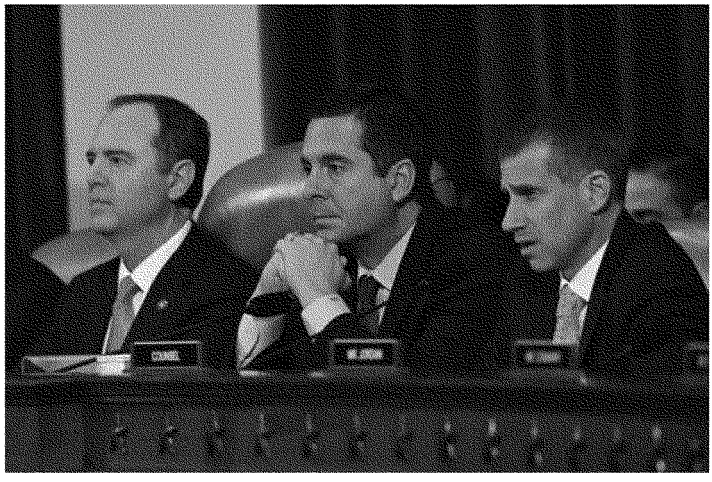

From left, House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif. and ranking member Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., listen as Steve Castor, Republican staff attorney for the House Oversight Committee addresses Former Ukraine ambassador Marie Yovanovitch on Nov. 15, 2019 during testimony before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in a public hearing in the impeachment inquiry into allegations President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate his political rivals Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



Demonstrators hold signs outside Longworth House Office Building after former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch testified to the House Intelligence Committee, Nov. 15, 2019, on Capitol Hill in Washington, in the second public impeachment hearing of President Donald Trump's efforts to tie U.S. aid for Ukraine to investigations of his political opponents. Julio Cortez, AP

Fullscreen



Barber John Enea, right, gives Kenneth Gary a hair cut as the public hearing of Donald Trump's impeachment investigation is shown on a television at the Expo Barber Shop in the Financial District of Manhattan, Nov. 13, 2019. The U.S. House launched the first public hearing Wednesday of Donald Trump's impeachment investigation, the extraordinary process to determine whether the 45th president of the United States should be removed from office. Mary Altaffer, AP

Fullscreen



Journalists file after the arrival of the two witnesses,, Nov. 13, 2019, on Capitol Hill in Washington, during the first public impeachment hearings of President Donald Trump's efforts to tie U.S. aid for Ukraine to investigations of his political opponents. Jacquelyn Martin, AP

Fullscreen



Golden Doodle therapy dog, 'Blue,' greets Congressional staff during a "Meet the Pets: Destress with Post-Election Therapy Dogs" event on Nov. 13, 2019 in Washington, DC. Pet Partners and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) organized the event to offer congressional staff a stress break and to share stories of how therapy animals help people of all ages in many settings. Elsewhere on Capitol Hill, in the first public impeachment hearings in more than two decades, House Democrats are trying to build a case that President Donald Trump committed extortion, bribery or coercion by trying to enlist Ukraine to investigate his political rival in exchange for military aide and a White House meeting that Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky sought with Trump. Mark Makela, Getty Images

Fullscreen



Live testimony of the House impeachment hearings against President Donald Trump is shown on a television at the Billy Goat Tavern on Nov. 13, 2019 in Chicago, Ill. In the first public impeachment hearings in more than two decades, House Democrats are making a case that U.S. President Donald Trump committed extortion, bribery or coercion by trying to enlist Ukraine to investigate political rivals in exchange for military aid and a White House meeting that Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky sought with Trump. Scott Olson, Getty Images

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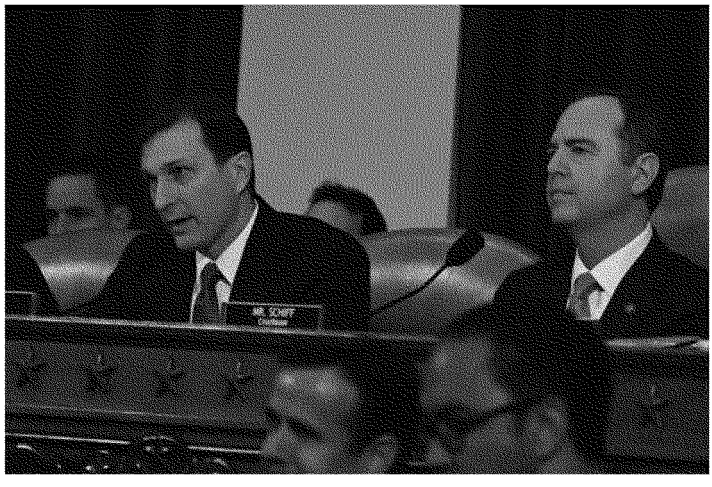

Daniel Goldman, director of investigations for the House Intelligence Committee majority staff, left, addresses Former Ukraine ambassador Marie Yovanovitch on Nov. 15, 2019 as she testifies before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in a public hearing in the impeachment inquiry into allegations President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate his political rivals. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif. is seen at right. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



William B. Taylor, Jr., the top American diplomat in Ukraine arrives to testify before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on Nov. 13, 2019 as the first witnesses in public congressional hearings in the impeachment inquiry into allegations President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate his political rivals. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



Demonstrators kneel near large banners on the lawn adjacent to the U.S. Capitol, while a top U.S. diplomat in Ukraine William Taylor, and career Foreign Service officer George Kent, testify before the House Intelligence Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2019, during the first public impeachment hearings of President Donald Trump's efforts to tie U.S. aid for Ukraine to investigations of his political opponents. Julio Cortez, AP

Fullscreen



Ranking member Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., left, looks on as Steve Castor, Republican staff legal counsel of the House Oversight Committee questions William B. Taylor, Jr., the top American diplomat in Ukraine along with State Department Ukraine-Russia expert George Kent during testimony on Nov. 13, 2019 before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence as the first witnesses in public congressional hearings in the impeachment inquiry into allegations President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate his political rivals. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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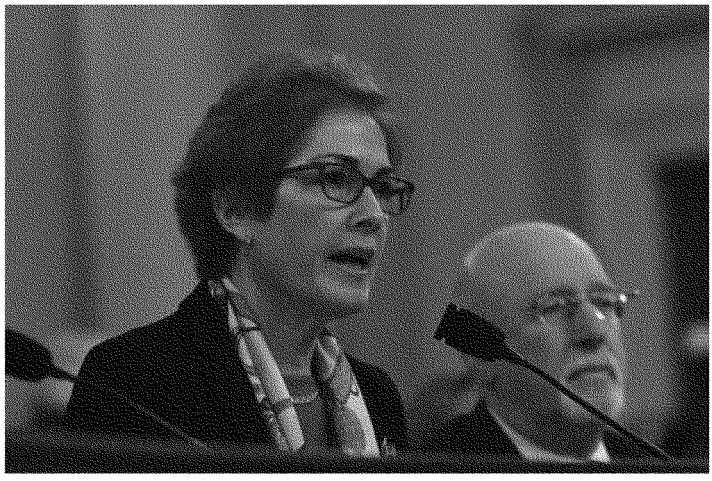

Former Ukraine ambassador Marie Yovanovitch testifies before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on Nov. 15, 2019 in a public hearing in the impeachment inquiry into allegations President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate his political rivals. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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Jennifer Williams, a foreign policy aide to Vice President Mike Pence, and Army Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, a Ukraine expert for the National Security Council, testify on Nov. 19, 2019. Jack Gruber/USA TODAY

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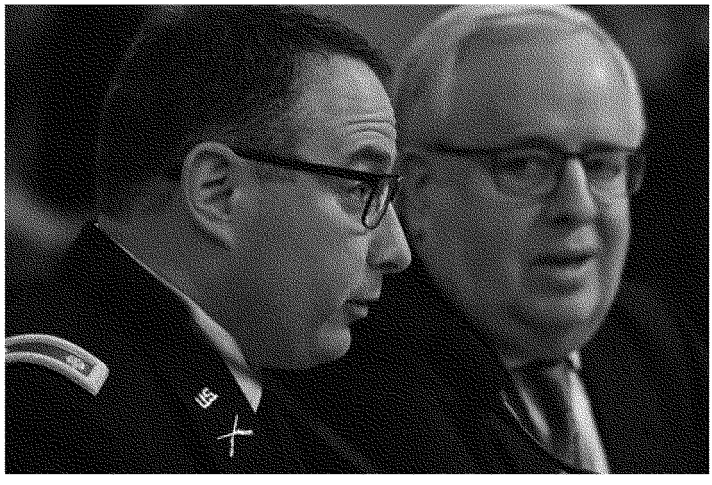

Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, a Ukraine expert for the National Security Council, testifies on Nov. 19, 2019 before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in a public hearing in the impeachment inquiry into allegations President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate his political rivals. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



Briefing books related to the impeachment hearing are displayed as Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman (C), National Security Council Director for European Affair and Jennifer Williams, adviser to Vice President Mike Pence for European and Russian affairs, testify before the House Intelligence Committee in the Longworth House Office Building on Capitol Hill Nov. 19, 2019 in Washington, DC. The committee heard testimony during the third day of open hearings in the impeachment inquiry against U.S. President Donald Trump, who House Democrats say withheld U.S. military aid for Ukraine in exchange for Ukrainian investigations of his political rivals. Chip Somodevilla, Getty Images

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Jennifer Williams, a foreign policy aide to Vice President Mike Pence, delivers opening remarks as she testifies on Nov. 19, 2019 before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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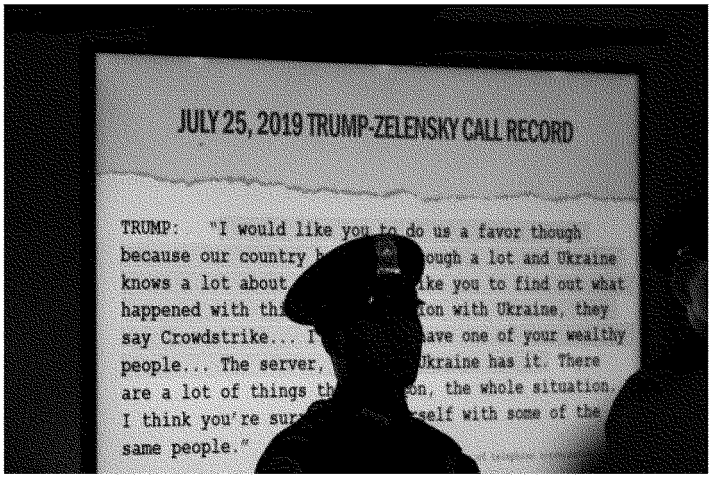

A transcript of a phone call between U.S. President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is displayed as Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, National Security Council Director for European Affair and Jennifer Williams, adviser to Vice President Mike Pence for European and Russian affairs, testify before the House Intelligence Committee in the Longworth House Office Building on Capitol Hill Nov. 19, 2019 in Washington, DC. The committee heard testimony during the third day of open hearings in the impeachment inquiry against U.S. President Donald Trump, who House Democrats say withheld U.S. military aid for Ukraine in exchange for Ukrainian investigations of his political rivals. Drew Angerer, Getty Images

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Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, center, a Ukraine expert for the National Security Council, returns to the hearing room during a break in testimony on Nov. 19, 2019 before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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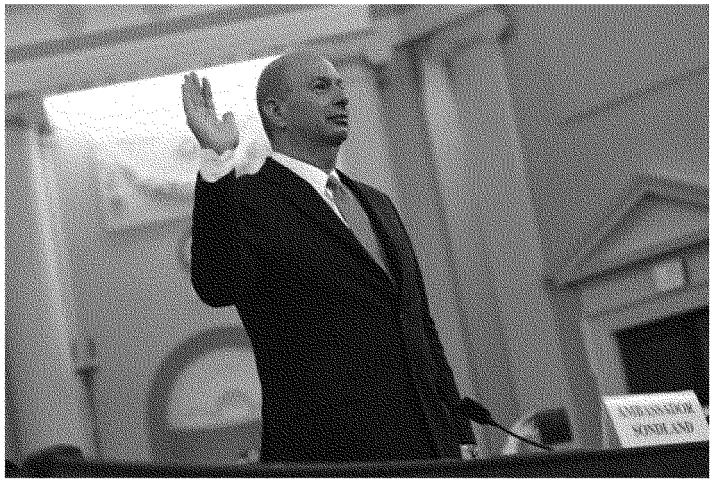

Gordon Sondland, U.S. Ambassador to the European Union, is sworn in as he testifies before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on Nov. 20, 2019 in a public hearing in the impeachment inquiry into allegations President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate his political rivals. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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Gordon Sondland, U.S. Ambassador to the European Union, arrives to testify before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on Nov. 20, 2019 in a public hearing in the impeachment inquiry into allegations President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate his political rivals. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



11/20/19 5:39:25 PM -- Washington, DC -- Defense Department official Laura Cooper and David Hale, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, testify before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in a public hearing in the impeachment inquiry into allegations President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate his political rivals. -- Photo by Jack Gruber, USA TODAY Staff Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



National Security Council official Fiona Hill testifies before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on Nov. 21, 2019. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Fullscreen



State department official David Holmes testifies before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on Nov. 21, 2019. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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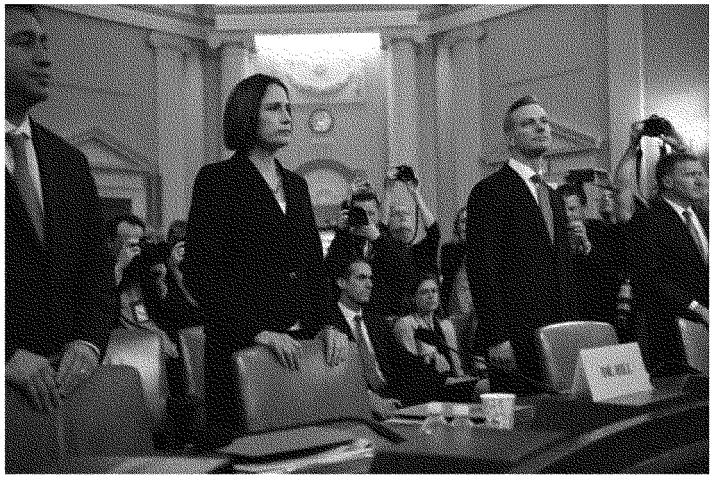

National Security Council official Fiona Hill and State department official David Holmes testify before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on Nov. 21, 2019 in a public hearing in the impeachment inquiry into allegations President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate his political rivals. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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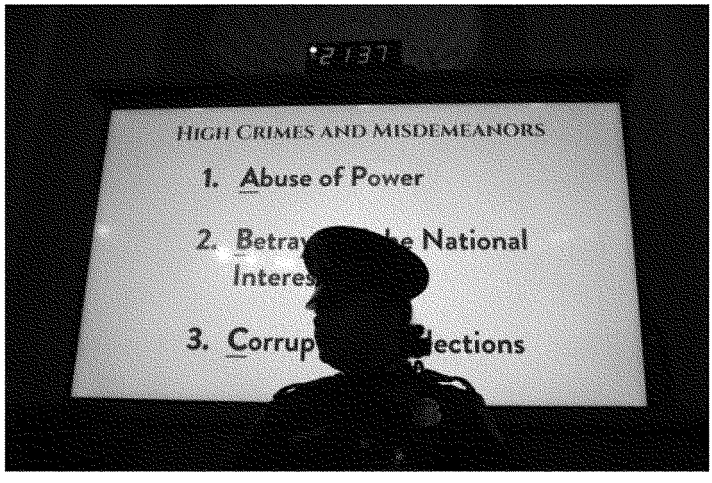

A list of high crimes and misdemeanors are listed on a monitor as constitutional scholars Noah Feldman of Harvard University, Pamela Karlan of Stanford University, Michael Gerhardt of the University of North Carolina, and Jonathan Turley of George Washington University testify before the House Judiciary Committee in the Longworth House Office Building on Capitol Hill Dec. 4, 2019 in Washington, DC. Alex Wong, Getty Images

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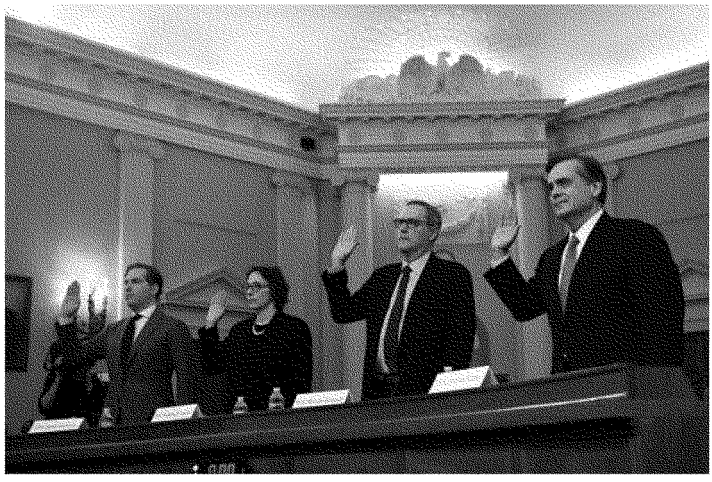

Constitutional scholars, from left, Noah Feldman, Pamela S. Karlan, Michael Gerhardt and Jonathan Turley are sworn in as the House Judiciary Committee holds the first formal impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump to explore how the Constitution applies to allegations of misconduct on Dec. 4, 2019. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY), Chairman, Judiciary Committee, left, speaks with senior Republican on the Judiciary Committee, Doug Collins (R-GA) before the House Judiciary Committee receives counsel presentations of evidence as part of the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump on Dec. 9, 2019 in Washington. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif, second from left and Rep. Mike Conaway, R-Texas, center, sit behind Republican staff attorney Steve Castor as the House Judiciary Committee receives counsel presentations of evidence as part of the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump on Dec. 9, 2019 in Washington. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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From left, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Chairwoman of the House Financial Services Committee Maxine Waters, D-Calif., Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., Chairwoman of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., House Ways and Means Chairman Richard Neal and Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Adam Schiff, D-Calif., unveil articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump, during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Dec. 10, 2019. Susan Walsh, AP

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Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., left, listens as Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., speaks during the House Judiciary Committee markup of H.Res. 755, Articles of Impeachment Against President Donald J. Trump in Washington, DC on Dec. 12, 2019. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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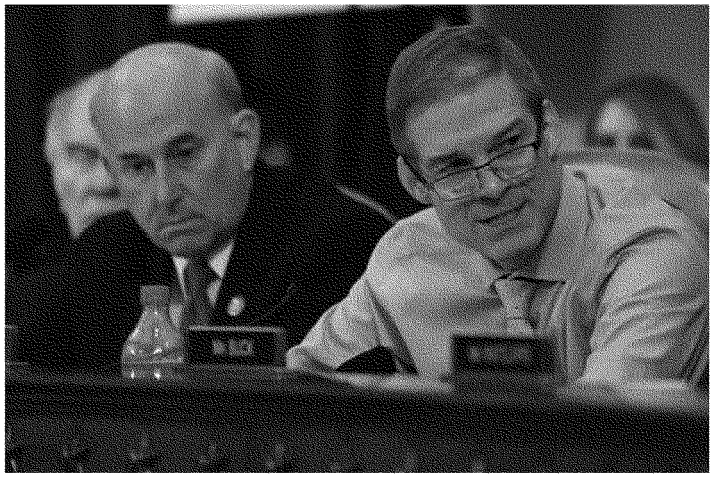

Rep. Louie Gohmert, R-Texas, left listens as Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio speaks during the House Judiciary Committee markup of H.Res. 755, Articles of Impeachment Against President Donald J. Trump in Washington, DC on Dec. 12, 2019. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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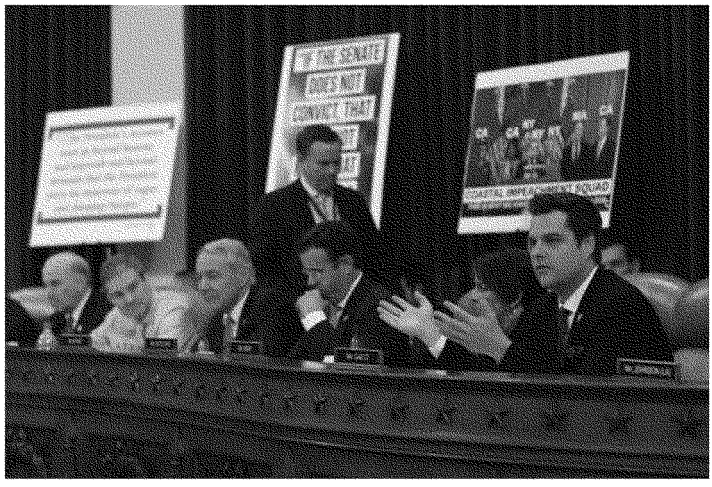

Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla. speaks as the House Judiciary Committee markup of H.Res. 755, Articles of Impeachment Against President Donald J. Trump in Washington, DC on Dec. 12, 2019. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., left, holds up a copy of the U.S. Constitution as she and Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., participate in a roll call vote in the House Judiciary Committee on the articles of impeachment against President Donald J. Trump in Washington, DC on Dec. 13, 2019. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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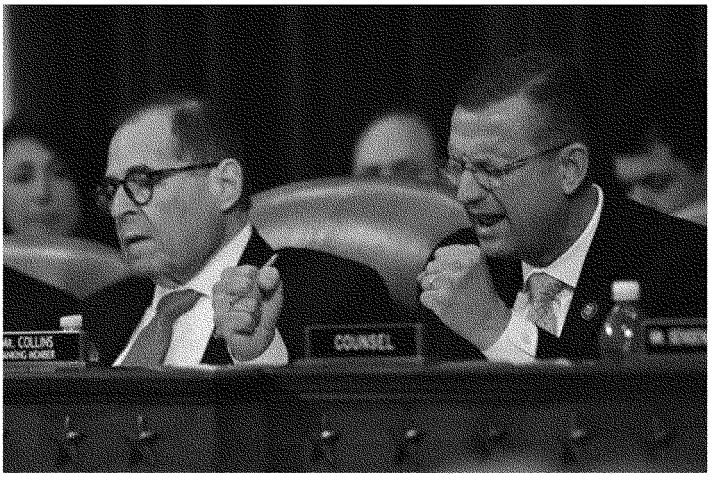

House Judiciary Committee ranking member Rep. Doug Collins, R-Ga., right, speaks as Chairman Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., listens during the markup of H.Res. 755, Articles of Impeachment Against President Donald J. Trump in Washington, DC on Dec. 12, 2019. Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

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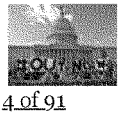
-  3 of 91
- 4 of 91
-  5 of 91
- 6 of 91



