

the Delta wave—again, in the summer of 2020.

Unfortunately, the FDA waited until September 22 to approve the booster. Between June and September, more than 11,000 seniors died from breakthrough infections, while more than 230,000 people tested positive. No doubt, a booster and/or therapeutics could have made a big difference in these seniors' lives.

It is easy to talk about the mistakes we have made with this virus. I want to spend a moment talking about solutions, though.

We need to unleash our community health centers and our county health departments in this COVID-19 fight. They have been the backbone of vaccination and treatment for communicable diseases for decades.

Once the Biden administration agrees to prioritize therapeutics, we need community health centers and county health departments to take over the telemedicine visits with trained nurses and implement treatment protocols across the United States.

In Kansas alone, we have over 200 community health centers and clinics funded with Federal dollars, along with over 100 local health departments that are accustomed to dealing with infectious diseases on a daily basis. These folks can implement these protocols based upon triaging at-risk individuals and starting early treatment. This will prevent many trips to the ER, as well as hospitalizations. Early treatment is what works.

Finally, and this goes without saying, I trust these nurses to make necessary referrals to the emergency room. They can do this. How do I know it? I have worked with these nurses for 30 years. I helped sponsor—was the medical director for three county health departments for almost 30 years. They do an incredible job. They are well equipped to handle this effort, but they need the Biden administration to move on therapeutics and move fast.

The medicines you could get for less than \$100 can oftentimes prevent hospitalizations and ICU visits. We need to give doctors the options of using therapeutics, along with steroids, anti-inflammatories, and other standard protocols that have been developed by these physicians who have treated literally thousands of COVID-19 patients.

Certainly, if we have better access to monoclonal antibodies or if these new miracle antiviral agents were available, we could use them as well. But, please, let's empower physicians and these health departments and community health centers, these experienced nurses, to do their job.

Time is precious. We cannot afford additional delays. We can't afford more confusion, more mixed messaging, and more mixed management. The Biden administration must let patients and physicians decide what is best in their unique healthcare situation, not somebody who is sitting on a throne in Washington, DC, who seldom sees patients in the real world.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. I thank the Presiding Officer from Minnesota.

RECOGNIZING JANUARY 6 WORKERS

Madam President, I want to start by thanking my colleagues Leader SCHUMER and Senator KLOBUCHAR for their work to honor the police officers who risked their lives to protect this country 1 year ago tomorrow.

In the year since that dark day, we have learned more about all that those officers endured from the terrorists who stormed the Capitol—the racist slurs, the physical abuse, the mental injuries. We know things were so much worse than they appeared in the original reporting as more and more details have come out. These terrorists gouged someone's eyes out. They killed a Capitol Police officer and injured 140 others. They threatened to kill the Vice President. They brought a noose to the Capitol and paraded symbols of White supremacy. In fact, the people who broke into the office upstairs from my office in the Capitol—we have this on film—used flagpoles with Confederate flags and Trump flags attached to them. They brought equipment to take hostages.

It wasn't only Capitol Police officers who endured this attack and put their lives on the line serving our Republic on January 6. Workers throughout the Capitol risked everything that day, workers who do the radio and television broadcast and work in the media center, workers who work the floor, workers who clean up, and workers who do food service. They often don't get noticed, like the Capitol support staff. Every day, Capitol janitorial and maintenance and other workers, essential workers, do their jobs with skill and dedication and dignity. They have shown up for work during this pandemic.

Those workers were here on January 6 doing their jobs when the insurrectionists, when the rioters, when the—call it what you want—traitors stormed this building, barging into this Chamber, acting as if no one would ever hold them responsible or accountable for their violence, for their disregard for American values and for U.S. laws.

When the rampage was over, we know it was the largely Black and Brown custodial maintenance workers who were left to restore dignity to the Capitol. Their work, first of all, allowed us to come back and continue our work at 8 that night certifying the electoral votes and securing our democracy. As we know, domestic terrorists destroyed; Black and Brown custodians cleaned up; and maintenance workers, carpenters, painters, and union members rebuilt. Today, we honor them.

Some of the most enduring and moving images of that day are the pictures of these workers sweeping up the mess that terrorists made in the people's houses.

That night, after we voted—the Senator from Minnesota was there. We were all here voting in this Chamber. After the police and the National Guard—the DC Police, the Capitol Police, and others—after they cleared the terrorists out of this building, we came back at 8 and voted. I spent the night in the basement in my office. I live a 20-minute walk away. I really didn't want to walk home that night. But I walked around about midnight, walked around this building, over in the House and the Senate. I saw the destruction. I saw the window right upstairs from me, the half-moon window that terrorists, with their flagpoles with their Confederate flags and their Trump flags attached, broke through.

When I was back there at midnight that night, already the cleanup from the custodians had started, cleaning up after they had been threatened. After they had been called names as Black women, as immigrant women, after they had been called names by the terrorists, they were back there cleaning up. Already, a carpenter had cut a half-moon piece of plywood and nailed it to that window to keep this building safe and keep the elements out.

We honor those people today. It is what service looks like. It is what love of country looks like. It is what the dignity of work looks like. It tells you a lot about what is wrong with our economy. These essential workers—the people who prepare the food, the people who clean up, the people who provide security—the essential workers, like so many of their fellow service workers around this country, don't make a lot of money. They don't get much attention. They don't get much reward. They don't have much power. We simply don't value and respect all work the way we should.

I think of the words of Dr. King. One of my favorite Dr. King quotes is this:

If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, "Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well."

Dr. King said:

No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance.

He later said that no job with adequate compensation is menial.

Look at the words of Pope Francis a few days ago in his Christmas Eve address or think back 100 years, 120 years, to Pope Leo, the labor Pope, in *Rerum Novarum*, where he first introduced—at least in my view—first introduced the term, I assume in Latin, "dignity of work."

Pope Francis, in his Christmas Eve address just a few days ago, said:

[God] reminds us of the importance of granting dignity to men and women through [their] labour, [and] also . . . granting dignity to human labour itself.

Those are Pope Francis's words.

No work is insignificant. All labor has dignity. We ought to treat it that

way, starting with honoring these workers.

Last year, I joined my colleagues in a resolution to honor all the workers who risked their lives that day: custodians, maintenance workers, Capitol Police officers, journalists, the floor staff, the workers in our offices. All of them served this country. All of them risked their safety to preserve our democracy. All of them deserve our gratitude.

Today, though, or tomorrow, actually, but I will ask tonight because my colleagues—because of Senator Isakson's funeral, many will be there tomorrow. I ask my colleagues to join me and Senators KLOBUCHAR and SCHUMER and Senators CASEY and BOOKER in a resolution honoring specifically the Capitol janitorial and maintenance staff—all essential workers—for their bravery and service to our country on January 6.

One of my favorite parts of this job—and the Presiding Officer knows this because we have had these conversations and because of her appreciation for work and for the people who work so hard and get so little—one of the joys of this job is to do what Abraham Lincoln used to do. When staff wanted him to stay in the White House and win the war and free the slaves and preserve the Union, Lincoln said: No, I have to go out and get my public opinion bath.

One of the joys of this job is to talk to the workers here just about their lives or about what happened on January 6. One custodial worker and I were talking. She has been in this country for 30 years. She has been a citizen for 20 years, and she has worked in this job for 30 years. She has been a citizen for 20 years. She and a number of others were locked in a room where terrorists were pounding on the walls and were screaming racial epithets and were screaming anti-immigrant utterances, all of that. Yet she still works here. She was one of the ones who had to clean up after them.

As I said, the terrorists destroyed; the Black and Brown maintenance workers cleaned up; and the union trades people rebuilt.

This resolution that I am going to offer tomorrow reaffirms the Senate's commitment to strengthening their rights as workers and providing support and resources to ensure their health, well-being, safety, and protection from further attacks. Their support should include higher pay. It should include collective bargaining rights for all of them. It should include paid sick leave and vacation leave. It should include comprehensive health insurance with mental health resources.

Don't think that many of these—you all understand that many of these police officers, many of these custodial workers, many of the movers and the plumbers and the others who were locked in their rooms or offices or buildings during this—I am not a men-

tal health expert at all, but many of them, I am sure, suffer from issues of nightmares and other kinds of anxieties that we need to help them with.

I hope my colleagues will join me, not as Republicans or Democrats but as Americans, as Members of this body. These workers serve us all. They allowed us to do our work for America that night. After we essentially were run out of this room and were safe for several hours, they allowed us, because of their work, to come back here and be safe and do our jobs that we took an oath of office on January 3, 2021, to do. This building wouldn't function without them.

No one should have to endure what they did at the hands of domestic terrorists.

To all of the Capitol custodians and service workers who come to work in this building each day to ensure our democracy functions, thank you, thank you, thank you.

I have this resolution honoring the Capitol's essential workers, applauding them for their service. I had intended to try to pass this resolution by unanimous consent tomorrow, but I recognize that many of my colleagues are out of town at the funeral honoring one of the really good men who served in this body, Johnny Isakson from Georgia.

I hope we can take this resolution up and pass this commonsense resolution next week when we return.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I am really pleased and honored to follow my colleague from Ohio and to join in supporting the resolution that he is offering to pay homage and to express gratitude to the essential workers in this building, in the Capitol Complex, in this temple of democracy, for all they have done, not only on January 6 but in the aftermath of that brutal assault on our democracy.

We talk in abstract now about the institution and the assault on this institution, but the lasting and enduring trauma for those workers that we will recognize in this resolution is tremendously important. It is important to them, but it is important to us as well that we recognize our duty and our obligation to them for the dignity of their work and what they did to enable us to come back on that evening, January 6, and do our duty—and do it in a bipartisan way, coming together on that day.

We were all witnesses to a brutal crime. We were all witnesses to an insurrection and a riot that stands as a dark and terrible milestone—the anniversary tomorrow of probably the most abhorrent attack on our democratic institutions. And all of us who were witnesses can never forget the horror of that day—the sheer physicality of the attack, the blood in the hallways, the sights and sounds of rioters with bats and pipes bearing Trump banners and

Confederate flags and seeking to do physical harm to us and to kill the Vice President. That kind of physical, brutal, cruel attack, with the hope—in fact, intent—of killing and injuring, had its effect. In fact, people died.

Our Capitol Police bravely defended us, with determination and courage, and so did many other heroes that day—the National Guard and the DC Police. But let us never forget that mob was called here to this very Chamber by the former President in a cynical bid to keep himself in power through a coup that would subvert the will of the people on election day. And we were here—we were all standing and then sitting at our desks when we were rushed from the Chamber because of the threat of physical assault on us.

In the end, their efforts were thwarted. Congress certified the election result that night as planned. We were undeterred, undaunted by the violent and deadly attack on the Capitol and our democracy.

But that day was not a one-off. It was not an isolated or aberrant incident. In fact, it was a symptom and a symbol of a deeper, destructive violence of violent extremism—a virus of domestic terrorism that continues to infect our Nation; in fact, the most persistent and lethal threat to our national internal security.

According to the intelligence community and the FBI, it is violent extremism and White supremacy. That attack left scars and wounds that remain unhealed, the lives that were lost, and many of our staff, many of those maintenance workers, many of the cafeteria and janitorial staff struggle with lingering trauma from the violence that they faced on that day.

The attack reminded us of how fragile and in danger our democratic institutions are when our leaders, when we as leaders, fail to protect them. The mob that assaulted our Capitol was fueled by the Big Lie—the baseless falsehood that massive fraud occurred during the 2020 election.

That Big Lie was propagated and supported by the President and his enablers, and they have continued to fuel those delusions. Donald Trump has incited continually the kind of falsehoods that lead to a sharp rise in threats against lawmakers in the Capitol here and a higher comfort level with violence at every level—in school boards, in statehouses.

The Big Lie has now become a pretense. It has become a pretense for some Republican leaders and State governments across the country to pass legislation making it harder to vote—meaning that fewer people have fewer times and fewer places to cast their vote.

At least 19 States have passed 34 new laws that restrict voting rights based on that Big Lie—the bogus, false claim of fraud. And Republicans in a number of States are vesting the power to overturn election results—literally, to deny the results of the vote count rather

than respecting the will of the people, whether it is the vote canvass boards or legislative committees or other State officials having the power to strike down and overturn the results by refusing to certify them or literally disregarding them.

All of this voter suppression is poisonous. It is toxic to our democracy. And we have an obligation, on this solemn anniversary of that horrific attack, to recommit ourselves to holding accountable those domestic terrorists and violent extremists who stormed the Capitol and hunted us—lawmakers and others—ransacked the halls that we regard with so much reverence, defaced and debased not just the building but the concept of democracy. And we should pursue not only prosecutions against the 700 or 1,000 people who can be held criminally responsible for defacing the Capitol or illegally entering or other acts of violence but everyone who aided and abetted them. They must be held accountable, no matter what their rank or their office, no matter how high the facts and the law will go. I urge the Department of Justice to pursue them, to prosecute them, to make sure that they are held accountable.

We also need to fortify those institutions. And that is why passing the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act have to be among our priorities and changing the rules to make that possible.

My colleagues and I will bring to the Senate floor for a vote in the coming weeks, no later than January 17, those measures in an effort to change the rules to enable their passage. We need to do whatever is necessary to pass those measures, including limiting the filibuster.

There is a direct through line from the Big Lie in the January 6 assault, incited by Donald Trump, to violent extremism and domestic terrorism, to voter suppression and the overturning of elections, eventually to the destruction of our democracy. During the peaceful transition of power that eventually did take place last January, President Biden reminded us that a better world is not something that is given to us; it requires hard work. Unity is not inevitable; it is achievable through what we do to make it possible. Democracy is not a spectator sport.

The values and norms and institutions of our democracy are fragile, as threatened now as they are precious, and they depend on people fighting for them in times of adversity. And truly now we are in a time of adversity.

What haunts me, as I think back on January 6, is how close we came to losing our democracy, how close we came to shattering the traditions and norms—much as the windows of this building were shattered—and how a few people continue to believe they could demagogue and enable Trump to stage that coup.

There is no forgetting what some of our colleagues did. There is no denying it. But we have sought to work together because we come here and we are sent here for a common purpose, which is to meet the needs of Americans, especially in a time of pandemic and economic hardship.

This past year has truly been one of hardship and heartbreak for so many. And as we think back to that day, a year ago, we need to redouble our determination to hold dear the democratic values and institutions that mean elected representatives truly represent the people. That is what elections do. That is why every vote should count and every vote must count. And that is the purpose of the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

We have our part to do. We need to do it. And I hope my colleagues will not only relive and remember but act on it—the common purpose of that day when we came back to count the vote—to make sure that we can come together again not just to honor the people who enable us to do it but also to honor the people of America who elect us to do it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

JANUARY 6

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, why January 6? Why were thousands of Trump supporters here in Washington on that specific date, January 6? They were here on January 6 because that was the last possible day that Donald Trump and his followers could overturn the election in which Joe Biden had just beaten the sitting President soundly—81 million votes to 74 million votes. The gap in the electoral college was much bigger on a percentage basis, 306 to 232.

But Trump and his followers decided that they were not going to just give up power just because their candidate lost an election. And their decision to put power ahead of the rule of law is, frankly, totally understandable.

Over the course of human existence, thousands of second-place finishers, either through election or by the dynamics of power succession, have refused to bend to the rules.

Most recently, Russia briefly flirted with democracy until Vladimir Putin and his cronies rigged the rules to set him up in power permanently. And throughout history, many slighted Princes or Generals have just chosen to seize power, through force or coercion, if they couldn't get it through the standing rules. Wanting power and willing to do anything to get power is as old as civilization. And that is why all those people broke into the Capitol a year ago tomorrow. They were called to Washington by President Trump to pressure Congress and State legislators and Vice President Pence to suspend the rules of succession, void the election, and install Donald Trump as President, even though he lost. Let's

not pretend that anything else happened that day.

Senators CRUZ and HAWLEY and many, many other Republicans were, on January 6, trying to get Congress to delay the certification of electors to give Trump more time to overturn the will of the voters. The rioters came to the Capitol to use violence as a last resort to try to pressure Congress to adopt the Cruz-Hawley plan. They stormed the building, and many of them were explicit when they were here that day, that they were inside the building to support President Trump, to support Senator CRUZ. By the end of the day, dozens were killed or badly injured.

It wasn't a spontaneous random act of mass violence. It was a coordinated attempt to use violence, or at least the threat of violence for many, to void the 2020 election and install Donald Trump as an unelected leader of the United States of America.

History has seen this play a million times before.

But I think here in the Senate, we often get lulled into a little bit of a sense of complacency because the last vestiges of the pre-Trump era of the Republican Party still exist here in the Senate. In the Senate, only seven Republicans voted for Senators CRUZ and HAWLEY's attempt to void Joe Biden's victory. And Senator MCCONNELL and some others here said the right thing that day and the days afterward.

Behind closed doors, many of our veteran Republican colleagues often whispered to us how awful and vulgar the Trump rioters are and how dearly they support the rule of law. But almost never do those Republican colleagues say those things out loud because the new mainstream of the Republican Party—the Trump Republican Party—does not believe that Joe Biden won the 2020 election. Pick your conspiracy theory, but 7 out of 10 Republicans—literally, tens of thousands of Americans—believe that somehow Pakistani intelligence operatives or Italian satellites or Venezuelan communists were involved in secretly switching millions of votes from Donald Trump to Joe Biden.

But maybe more importantly, what leads these Republicans to believe these wild conspiracy theories is a more insidious belief, a belief that if a Democrat wins an election, it must be, by definition, illegitimate. That is why this many Republicans believed Joe Biden didn't win, even though they have zero evidence to back up this claim. They don't need evidence because they just believe the Democrats are evil, that Democrats are illegitimate in governance. And if Democrats win, it just cannot be allowed to stand. Defeating Democrats is, to the Trump Republican Party, more important than maintaining democracy.

We know this because some of the most popular and revered national Republicans are calling openly for the suspension of democracy if democracy