

later, allow the way of the despot and the way of the mob to become the way of the future. Surely we did not build a new nation conceived in liberty only for its Capitol to one day be stormed by a mob at the behest of a President because he refused to acknowledge the basic right of every American to vote him out of office, to be free to disagree with him and reject him.

When the Declaration of Independence was signed, John Adams wrote in a letter that, hundreds of years from now, people will celebrate the day with what he called “pomp and parade,” but he also added that it will “cost us to maintain this declaration.”

So we have a choice to make as a country. On this 250th anniversary of the year of our independence, we have to decide whether we wish to be governed by the spirit of January 6 or the spirit of 1776.

What is this spirit of 1776? It is the belief in government of, by, and for the people, not of, by, and for any one leader.

Here, no leader is above the law, nor are they above the people whom they serve. Look around this city. Our great monuments here were built by grateful citizens to honor others. They weren’t built by greedy leaders to honor themselves.

The spirit of 1776 knows that lawlessness and extremism don’t melt away on their own and must be rejected, even when it means standing up to a President or to one’s own party. Political courage can be hard; regaining a freedom lost even harder.

And above all else, here in the United States of America, we know that we are not subjects to be ruled; we are citizens to be heard. This is America. This is where freedom rings. And perhaps these sound like lofty principles. Well, I am from the “Live Free Or Die” State.

In New Hampshire, we know that principles like freedom matter. We know that they matter because people gave their lives for these principles, and they died for these principles in the hope that the rest of us might live by them. So that is why on this January 6, I am choosing to embrace this spirit of 1776, and I hope that freedom-loving Americans of all political stripes do too.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

ANNIVERSARY OF JANUARY 6

Mr. KIM. Mr. President, today is the fifth anniversary of the attack on this Capitol, on this extraordinary building that we love so dearly.

I personally believe that the Capitol Building is the most beautiful building in this country. It is the physical manifestation of article I of our Constitution, and I believe that to defile and disgrace this building is tantamount to defiling and disgracing our Constitution.

It should be the easiest thing for all of us across the political spectrum to

say that this building is sacred ground. And I am speaking here in the Senate Chamber where rioters broke into. Look, regardless of our political affiliation, we should be able to say what happened, that it was wrong, and that it should never happen again.

Five years does not seem like a lot of time, but as anyone with young kids knows all too well, time moves quickly. I remember 2 days after January 6, I drove back home from the Capitol, back home to New Jersey. And I drove actually straight to my kids’ daycare to be able to pick them up. My 2 boys were only 3 years old and 5 years old at the time. My older son usually bounds out and runs up to me, but this time, he walked out slowly, and he came up to me, and he asked me: Are you OK?

And I glanced towards my wife, who shrugged her shoulders, because we had specifically agreed that we would not mention anything to the kids at this point about what happened on January 6. So I looked back at my boy, and I asked him: What do you mean?

And he looked right back at me, and he said: Did something bad happen at work?

Now, he didn’t know exactly what had happened, but he knew something did. He knew something not right happened. A 5-year-old child can grasp that fundamental fact about January 6, that we don’t use the means of violence against one another, especially in determining the results of our democracy.

Now, if a 5-year-old can grasp that, why is it so difficult for so many, including some here at the Capitol, to be able to do the same? Why do so many pretend like nothing happened or seek to downplay the events of that day? I call this a purposeful amnesia. Five years out, it is so much more damaging to our democracy than the shattered windows of 5 years ago. This is the storm after the storm.

Now, here is an example to the extent with which congressional Republicans are trying to erase the history. In 2022, the year after the January 6 attack, Congress passed a law that mandated a plaque be placed on the western front of the Capitol to allow visitors to this building to remember.

Now, the plaque itself, pretty simple, an image of the Capitol with a few lines of text: “On behalf of a grateful Congress, this plaque honors the extraordinary individuals who bravely protected and defended this symbol of democracy on January 6, 2021. Their heroism will never be forgotten.”

And beneath the text, various law enforcement entities are listed. A simple message of remembrance for those brave individuals who acted and for the democracy they defended. Now, we should be able to walk out of this Chamber today and view that plaque. In fact, it was supposed to be installed by March of 2023.

But instead, nearly 3 years after it was mandated to be made public, 5 years after the event it was meant to

commemorate, the plaque is missing, is absent at the direction of Speaker JOHNSON. As of last night, it is not just absent; it is being explicitly denied because of Speaker JOHNSON, who is still refusing to do the simple thing, the right thing, and displaying it for the American people to see.

Now, that absence and denial is part of a broader effort by Speaker JOHNSON, President Trump, and so many others to prevent us from remembering, to encourage us to forget—the purposeful amnesia. Now, they have done this by gaslighting us, downplaying the events of that day. Speaker JOHNSON directed his conference to blur the face of rioters in publicly released images so they couldn’t be “charged by the Department of Justice.”

A member of his House conference referred to January 6 as resembling a “normal tourist visit.” President Trump called that day a “day of love.” He called the rioters patriots, and he pardoned more than 1,500 rioters on his first day in office last year, signing an Executive order directing the Department of Justice to drop pending cases against those suspected of taking part in this attack.

But we know better. We know the truth. Now, 5 years out, I still haven’t found the words yet to fully tell my boys what happened then. I never fully answered my older son’s questions: Are you OK? Did something bad happen at work?

I have avoided it for 5 years, and I have been wondering why. Why is it that I have been unable to be able to find the words to be able to talk to my child? And what I have come to understand today as I have been thinking about it is I have not talked to them about this because I have wanted to hold off on confronting the full implications of that day.

I think what I have been waiting for is some moment where I can say with assurance that things are better now, where I could tell them about what happened on January 6, but immediately say: That was a horrible thing in the past, but we are beyond it now. Things aren’t going to be bad again.

But 5 years on, I am still waiting for that day, but it hasn’t come—not yet. Now, 5 years in, I am faced with the reality that I don’t actually know when that day will come. I don’t actually even know if that day will come. I can’t say for certain that we will get there.

When I look at today compared to 5 years ago, yes, our Capitol is secure today. Yes, our own security here is more assured. But I can’t say that about our country. Sadly, when I reflect back on 5 years ago compared to today, I actually believe we are more divided now than we were 5 years ago.

I believe our democracy is even more fragile now than it was 5 years ago. And I believe that our future as a nation is more perilous than it was 5 years ago. The future threats to our democracy may not come in the form of

rioters storming our Halls, but that doesn't mean that the threat isn't present.

So after I am done here, I will go home and try to have a conversation with my boys. And I will tell them about the divisions we faced 5 years ago and that we continue to face as a nation. I will talk to them about the meaning of cowardice, of those hiding the truth from the American people to try to erase from our memories with that purposeful amnesia.

But I will also tell my boys it is not just about the broken windows and the fighting that occurred here on the Capitol Grounds, but I will tell them about the courage of those who kept us safe, of the Capitol Police officers, many who still serve and protect us to this day, who deserve better than how they have been treated, that they continue with their mission of keeping us safe, even if we are ones that deny what happened on that day and deny the injuries and the harm that they faced.

I will tell my boys growing up in New Jersey about a man from New Jersey named Brian Sicknick, someone whose name should never dissipate from the Halls of this building that he sought to protect. I will tell them about those willing to stand up for our Capitol and our democracy, whose example we should seek to replicate, not just on the anniversaries of January 6, but every day.

I hope to be able to tell my boys that we can heal this country. I hope that we can tell them that we are taking steps to mend the wounds of that day and of the days since that have driven us further apart as Americans.

I should not hold off on having this conversation, hoping and wishing for a day where I can tell them that the threat is passed and gone. We as Americans should confront the problems that we face full on, to not hide from the fact of how fragile our democracy is now. We see it for what it is, but the fragility of our democracy should renew our purpose and our conviction to stand up and do everything we can to make sure days like January 6 never happen again.

And that is my promise to you, to this country, to my State, and to my little boys, that the work can start right here, right now. I stand ready to heal this country and ready to make it OK for my boys, for your kids and your grandkids; let us keep fighting every day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, as we all remember if we were here 5 years ago, this building was attacked. The Capitol was stormed. Democracy was under siege, not just the physical structure, but our lives, literally. Each of us had a memory of that moment.

And I will never forget, I am sure most of my colleagues won't either, how we left this Chamber, without panic, but certainly in a surge of emo-

tion as we heard the pounding at the doors as we were told to move quickly.

Senators were ordered to move out of harm's way, and we saw through the windows or the doors—or face-to-face some of us—the pipes and baseball bats. It was a moment that nobody who went through it can ever forget because insurrectionists scaled the walls; they smashed windows; they forced their way through the doors into this Chamber and the House. They broke into the legislative branch of government.

And it wasn't simply a symbolic move; it was literally to stop the counting of the electoral votes, to halt the peaceful transition of power, which is the trademark of our democracy.

Five years ago, Capitol Police and other law enforcement stood between these attackers and ourselves, Members of this body. They resisted the insurrectionists trying to scale these walls with their own bodies, and they were hurt. One hundred forty officers were injured, several died—five perished.

And in that terrible moment, one of the darkest times in the history of our democracy, we came together. We joined arms, maybe not literally, but we were together in that undisclosed location—Republicans and Democrats—who had walked at a pretty good pace through the halls and then confined together, guarded by members of law enforcement as well as the military.

We were together, and we felt under threat together, but we decided, when we were asked, that we would stay. We would not go home for the night, as some of the security wanted us to do. We would stay to count the votes. As dark as that moment was in the history of the United States of America, we can be proud, as a body, of that decision to count the votes and do our duty, rather than shirk it in the midst of that continuing unknown and potential danger as the security literally went through the broken glass and the desecrated offices and this very Chamber to make sure that there were no bombs or rioters left and we could come back with some assurance of safety. That moment, we came together, 5 years ago—5 years ago.

And what a difference 5 years makes. In the past 5 years, segments of society have latched onto baseless and harmful conspiracy theories about the attack. There are January 6 deniers, just as there are election deniers and there are Holocaust deniers. We live in an era when conspiracy theorists can spread falsehoods through social media and other means around the globe, certainly around our country.

And these baseless and harmful conspiracy theories are, by now, in a book by the current FBI Director, Kash Patel, who claims that the January 6 attack was “the insurrection that never was” and was encouraged by “deep state” agitators as a pretext to persecute Trump supporters.

Well, we know who incited the January 6 insurrection. It is on tape. It can be seen. In a speech outside the White House on January 6, Donald J. Trump claimed to a crowd of thousands of Trump supporters that “we won this election and we won it by a landslide.”

He promised to “stop the steal.” He vowed that “we will never give up, we will never concede.”

And, most damningly, he told that crowd:

[I]f you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore.

And that is when the crowd marched down the National Mall to this building, which they stormed, to the police officers whom they attacked, and the doors that they knocked down.

They entered the Capitol at 2 p.m. Not until 4:17 p.m. did Donald Trump call those supporters to go home—2 hours after people were injured and some died.

So we shouldn't be surprised, perhaps, that Donald Trump, in one of his first acts of office, pardoned all of those rioters—blanket pardon, even the ones who hit and caused the deaths of the Capitol Police.

And maybe we shouldn't be surprised that just several weeks ago, when I asked three judicial nominees—three lawyers nominated to be Federal district judges by Donald Trump—“Was the Capitol attacked on January 6,” they refused to answer, each of them parroting a standard remark to the effect of: President Biden was certified as the winner.

They refused to tell the truth about January 6. That is how history is degraded. That is how history is rewritten. That is how the truth is suppressed. That is why we are here today. That is why I am standing here to make sure that history is preserved.

You know, we say often we want to speak truth to power. We need to speak history to authority. We need to speak the truth to America about what happened on January 6.

Notwithstanding all of those conspiracy theorists, the Department of Justice inspector general reported there is “no evidence . . . that the FBI had undercover employees in the various protest crowds, or at the Capitol, on January 6. No FBI CHS [confidential human source] was authorized to enter the Capitol or restricted area, or to otherwise break the law on January 6.”

I am under no illusion. I know this speech is not going to talk any of those conspiracy theorists out of their deep-seated beliefs, but we owe it to our children—and I owe it to two grandchildren born within the last 6 months—that we preserve history, despite the blanket pardon, despite the distortion of history that has occurred.

So we are here today to say to our Republican colleagues: Join us in preserving that history. Join us in making sure the truth is told from this Chamber to America, to all of our country.

Do not forget, 5 years ago, rioters, incited by President Trump, tried to destroy our democracy.

Trump pardoned, glorified them, even empowering some of them in key administration offices. We cannot allow him to rewrite history.

Do not forget. Police were brutally attacked, injured, and killed for doing their job to enable a peaceful democratic transition of power. They still bear the scars. So does our democracy.

Do not forget democracy is not guaranteed. It cannot be taken for granted. Do not forget it is our duty to remember the truth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today with so many of my colleagues to recognize the anniversary of one of the hardest days our democracy has faced, and I also want to focus on some of the work that we have done to respond and the work we still must do.

Five years ago, insurrectionists—they tried to overturn an election. They assaulted our heroic Capital Police officers and attacked not only this building but American democracy itself.

The President wants to rewrite the story of what happened that day, but he wasn't at that Capitol when the violent mob attacked. I was there.

As the incoming chair of the Rules Committee, it was my job and Roy Blunt's job to make sure all of the electoral ballots were counted. That morning began with pomp and circumstance. Senator Blunt and I and the Vice President led a train of elected officials from the Senate to the House to start the ceremony.

Three pairs of young women held the mahogany boxes with the electoral ballots for the entire country and then came the insurrection. We got back here. I remember speaking—my desk was up there. I remember the police telling me that this was happening, and I had to, in my role, tell the Senators to get away from the windows, and we were brought to an undisclosed location.

Capitol Police officers were attacked, pepper-sprayed, clubbed, and trampled. We were in that room together. I remember praying. I remember incoming President Biden on the TV. I remember the Senators trying to call the National Guard to see if anyone could help.

I remember in there coordinating, talking to Senator SCHUMER while Senator Blunt talked to Senator MCCONNELL about what we were going to do. And we vowed that morning, whatever happened, we were going to come back, and we were going to finish our job, no matter what time it was.

So Senator Blunt negotiated the negotiations about the number of objections. I worked on keeping everyone in that room and other things, and then, together, we got it done.

And at 3:30 in the morning, the only Senators left were Senator Blunt and

myself and Vice President Pence, along with those same six women carrying those mahogany boxes from this Chamber to the other. But this time, it wasn't pageantry. It wasn't a parade. It was just the Vice President, Senator Blunt and myself and those boxes. But this time we were walking over broken glass. We were walking past marble pillars spray-painted with racist vulgarities.

But we made the walk. We got to the House. The House Members were there. Speaker PELOSI, at the time, was there waiting for us, and we did our jobs. That was January 6.

Tragically, five brave officers who reported for duty that day ultimately passed away, and the courage of these officers will be remembered forever.

And rewriting of history cannot stand. As we know today, the White House released a web page that described the day as “patriots march to the Capitol” and blamed the Capitol Police, and it doesn't even mention the injuries and the over 100 officers injured.

I remember them in the room protecting the Senators with scratches on their faces.

It was clear that this can never happen again.

Then, as I chaired the Rules Committee, Ranking Member Blunt and I, along with Chair GARY PETERS and Ranking Member Portman from the Homeland Security Committee, immediately launched a bipartisan investigation of what the failures were with security, planning, and response. We had a number of bipartisan hearings that stretched on for just a few months, and then we came out with major recommendations with then-Police Chief Manger, who implemented nearly every single one of them. Hundreds of changes were made.

Never again will police officers who are meant to guard us have worse equipment than people who are trying to invade the Capitol. Never again will they go to a bus and have their gear, their riot gear, locked in the bus. Never again will you hear the haunting words of an officer on the police radio say: “Does anyone have a plan?”

We also had to help protect our democracy against future assaults. I worked on a bipartisan basis to update the antiquated Electoral Count Act in the Senate and helped usher that through, along, again, with Senator Blunt. We worked with the House Members to improve what the insurrectionists thought was some kind of a loophole that they could use to stop the will of the people. That law has now been changed. We worked to get better benefits for our officers, and we worked to change the number of officers to make sure that this wouldn't happen again.

Despite our bipartisan efforts after January 6 to protect this Capitol and our democracy, 5 years later, President Trump and his allies continue, sadly, to spread a false narrative. He has

called January 6 a “day of love.” He has described the prosecutions of people for crimes related to the January 6 attack on the Capitol and on law enforcement as a “grave national injustice.” He has pardoned more than 1,500 criminals.

For this administration, it is the very heroes who defended our Capitol—our democracy—on January 6 whom they now consider a threat. I don't think career Federal prosecutors are terrorists or despicable people, as they have called them. I think they are public servants, and I think they are patriots.

We have seen repeated attacks on access to the ballot box from this administration. We must pass the Freedom to Vote Act, which would guarantee access to the ballot. As we mark the somber fifth anniversary of January 6, we know that democracy only held then because of those who defended the peaceful transfer of power. Those are the people whom we honor today: the Republican Senators who were willing to uphold that vote even though the candidate they supported did not win; the Republican Senators who actually, in this Chamber, spoke out and condemned the coup; the officers who protected us that day from something much worse than the fight that people experienced; and those who ended up dying and those who were injured. Those are the ones whom we honor today, not the insurrectionists.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: