



The Leadership Conference
on Civil and Human Rights

January 12, 2021

SUPPORT REMOVAL OF PRESIDENT TRUMP FROM OFFICE

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 220 national organizations committed to promoting and protecting the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we write today at a time when our country is facing a critical crossroads for the survival of our democracy. Last week, the world was horrified to witness a violent insurrection in our nation's Capitol that attempted to use mob violence fueled by white supremacy and anti-Semitism to overturn the results of a free and secure election and suppress the votes of millions of people. What we witnessed was nothing less than a frontal attack on our democracy by the sitting president of the United States, who weaponized racist and misleading rhetoric to incite a fatal insurrection. This is unacceptable and the president must be held accountable. We urge you to vote to impeach President Donald J. Trump and support his removal from office.

After weeks of contesting the results of the presidential election, pressuring and threatening state and local officials to reverse election results in his favor, and fomenting conspiracy theories and false narratives of election fraud, the president urged his followers to "stop the steal" at his "Save America Rally" on January 6. In his speech that day, President Trump incited a violent attack on the U.S. Capitol to overturn the will of "We the People." Not only did his incitement threaten — and in some cases end — the lives of the dedicated public servants (including janitors and other staff) who work at the Capitol day in and day out, members of Congress, the vice president, law enforcement officers, and the very members of the mob he created, that day he also sought to attack our democracy by intentionally preventing Congress from performing its constitutional duty to count the presidential electors and certify the election of the 46th president of the United States. Trump threatened the peaceful transition of power that has been a hallmark of our nation since its founding and desecrated the Constitution.

This is what white supremacy emboldened by a president who believes he is above the law looks like.

If this president is not held accountable for his actions, it will send the clear message that he is free to continue to incite violence through the end of his term and beyond. And right wing militants will get the clear message that they may continue to inflict racist violence upon anyone who stands in their way. The FBI has warned that there are armed protests planned

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for all 50 state capitols in the coming days.¹ Protecting our democracy is our elected leaders' most important responsibility. As history — both past and present — teaches us, our democracy cannot protect itself. We must protect it — especially from our own leaders when they violate their sworn oath to our nation.

President Trump's own words inciting the white nationalist insurrectionists to "stop the count" and attack the Capitol — and our country — more than meet the threshold for impeachment and removal. In the weeks before January 6, he whipped the mob into a frenzy with lies about the election and calls to descend on Washington, D.C. In one of many tweets promoting the January 6 action, on December 19, President Trump tweeted: "Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, be wild!"² In his extended call to action on January 6, Trump told the insurrectionists where to go and when, and made clear that they would need to use force. And his words led to immediate action.

*We're going to have to **fight much harder**. . . . 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 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.** ...*

*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. ...*

*We fight like hell, and **if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore.***³

The driving force for the insurrectionists was white supremacy, animated by racism and anti-Semitism. Whether it was the confederate flag defiling the corridors of the Capitol, the white men in

¹ Zachary Cohen, *FBI warns 'armed protests' being planned at all 50 state capitols and in Washington DC*, CNN.com, Jan. 12, 2021, available at: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/11/politics/fbi-bulletin-armed-protests-state-us-capitol/index.html>

² George Petras, Janet Loehrke, Ramon Padilla, Javier Zarracina and Jennifer Borresen, *Timeline: How a Trump mob stormed the US Capitol, forcing Washington into lockdown*, USA Today, Jan. 8, 2021, available at: <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/2021/01/06/dc-protests-capitol-riot-trump-supporters-electoral-college-stolen-election/6568305002/>

³ Aaron Blake, *What Trump said before his supporters stormed the Capitol, annotated*, Washington Post, Jan .11, 2021, available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/interactive/2021/annotated-trump-speech-jan-6-capitol/>

“Camp Auschwitz” and “Six Million Wasn’t Enough” shirts invading the grounds, or a noose hung prominently outside the Capitol grounds, this president’s words unleashed a violent and racist mob intent on stopping at nothing to, as the president directed, “stop the steal” and ensure that he remained in office despite the results of the 2020 election.

To be clear, impeachment is but one step in the process through which we must seek accountability for these treasonous acts. President Trump, his enablers, and many of his followers violated multiple federal criminal and civil rights statutes, and they all must be held accountable using the many tools already at the disposal of federal prosecutors. The white supremacist violence that Trump unleashed last week is not new, but the perpetrators must be held accountable as a part of our country’s long overdue reckoning with white supremacy and systemic racism.

Every member of Congress has sworn an oath to protect and defend the Constitution. At this critical moment, you must fulfill your solemn duty and vote to impeach and remove the president after this unprecedented attack on our democracy. And your colleagues in the Senate must ensure that upon conviction of Trump, the penalty includes preventing him from ever serving in public office again.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
Interim President and CEO



LaShawn Warren
Executive Vice President for Government Affairs