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Senate

The Senate met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, have compassion on us with Your unfailing love. As our lawmakers prepare to formally certify the votes cast by the electoral college, be present with them. Guide our legislators with Your wisdom and truth as they seek to meet the requirements of the U.S. Constitution. Lord, inspire them to seize this opportunity to demonstrate to the Nation and world how the democratic process can be done properly and in an orderly manner. Help them to remember that history is a faithful stenographer, and so are You.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following letter from the Secretary of the Senate, which was ordered to lie on the table:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: On Tuesday, January 5, 2021, the President of the United States sent by messenger the attached sealed envelope addressed to the President of the Senate dated January 5, 2021, said to contain a message regarding additional steps addressing the threat posed by applications and other software developed or controlled by Chinese companies. The Senate not being in session on the day which the President delivered this message, I accepted the message at 5:00 p.m., and I now present to you the President's message, with the accompanying papers, for disposition by the Senate.

Respectfully,

JULIE A. ADAMS,
Secretary of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 11

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 11) to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces.

Mr. GRASSLEY. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to its further reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 13

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 13) to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on improvements to the security, integrity, and administration of Federal elections.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

JOINT SESSION OF THE TWO HOUSES—COUNTING OF ELECTORAL BALLOTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the provisions of S. Con. Res. 1, the Senate will now proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the counting of the electoral ballots.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:51 p.m., preceded by the Secretary of the Senate, Julie E. Adams, and the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Jennifer Hemingway, proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the purpose of counting electoral ballots.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Pursuant to S. Con. Res. 1 and section 17, title III, U.S. Code, when the two Houses withdraw from the joint session to count the electoral vote for separate consideration of an objection, a Senator may speak to the objection for 5 minutes and not more than once. Debate shall not exceed 2 hours, after which the Chair will put the question: Shall the objection be sustained?

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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The clerk will report the objection made in the joint session.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Objection from Representative GOSAR from Arizona and Senator CRUZ and others, "We, a Member of the House of Representatives and a United States Senator, object to the counting of the electoral votes of the State of Arizona on the ground that they were not, under all of the known circumstances, regularly given."

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader and the Democratic leader be allowed to speak and that following their remarks, the majority leader and the Democratic leader each control up to 1 hour of debate time and be authorized to yield up to 5 minutes of that time to any Senator seeking recognition. Further, I ask unanimous consent that the Senators be permitted to insert statements into the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

CHALLENGE TO THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we are debating a step that has never been taken in American history: whether Congress should overrule the voters and overturn a Presidential election.

I have served 36 years in the Senate. This will be the most important vote I have ever cast.

President Trump claims the election was stolen. The assertions range from specific local allegations, to constitutional arguments, to sweeping conspiracy theories. I supported the President's right to use the legal system. Dozens of lawsuits received hearings in courtrooms all across our country, but over and over, courts rejected these claims, including all-star judges whom the President himself nominated.

Every election, we know, features some illegality and irregularity, and, of course, that is unacceptable.

I support strong State-led voting reforms. Last year's bizarre pandemic procedures must not become the new norm. But, my colleagues, nothing before us proves illegality anywhere near the massive scale—the massive scale that would have tipped the entire election, nor can public doubt alone justify a radical break when the doubt itself was incited without any evidence.

The Constitution gives us here in Congress a limited role. We cannot simply declare ourselves a national

board of elections on steroids. The voters, the courts, and the States have all spoken. They have all spoken. If we overrule them, it would damage our Republic forever.

This election actually was not unusually close. Just in recent history, 1976, 2000, and 2004 were all closer than this one. The electoral college margin is almost identical to what it was in 2016. If this election were overturned by mere allegations from the losing side, our democracy would enter a death spiral. We would never see the whole Nation accept an election again. Every 4 years would be a scramble for power at any cost. The electoral college, which most of us on this side have been defending for years, would cease to exist, leaving many of our States with no real say at all in choosing a President.

The effects would go even beyond the elections themselves. Self-government, my colleagues, requires a shared commitment to the truth and a shared respect for the ground rules of our system. We cannot keep drifting apart into two separate tribes with a separate set of facts and separate realities with nothing in common except our hostility toward each other and mistrust for the few national institutions that we all still share.

Every time—every time in the last 30 years that Democrats have lost a Presidential race, they have tried a challenge just like this—after 2000, after 2004, and after 2016. After 2004, a Senator joined and forced the same debate. And, believe it or not, Democrats like Harry Reid, DICK DURBIN, and Hillary Clinton praised—praised and applauded the stunt. Republicans condemned those baseless efforts back then, and we just spent 4 years condemning Democrats' shameful attacks on the validity of President Trump's own election. So there can be no double standard. The media that is outraged today spent 4 years aiding and abetting the Democrats' attacks on our institutions after they lost.

But we must not imitate and escalate what we repudiate. Our duty is to govern for the public good. The United States Senate has a higher calling than an endless spiral of partisan vengeance.

Congress will either overrule the voters, the States, and the courts for the first time ever or honor the people's decision. We will either guarantee Democrats' delegitimizing efforts after 2016 became a permanent new routine for both sides or declare that our Nation deserves a lot better than this. We will either hasten down a poisonous path where only the winners of elections actually accept the results or show we can still muster the patriotic courage that our forebears showed not only in victory but in defeat.

The Framers built the Senate to stop short-term passions from boiling over and melting the foundations of our Republic. So I believe protecting our constitutional order requires respecting the limits of our own power. It would be unfair and wrong to disenfranchise

American voters and overrule the courts and the States on this extraordinarily thin basis, and I will not pretend such a vote would be a harmless protest gesture while relying on others to do the right thing. I will vote to respect the people's decision and defend our system of government as we know it.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CHALLENGE TO THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Vice President, as prescribed by the Constitution and the laws of the Nation, the purpose of this joint session is for tellers, appointed on a bipartisan basis by the two Houses, to read to the Congress the results of an election that has already happened. We are here to receive an announcement of a vote that has already been certified by every State in the Union and confirmed by the courts many times—many times over. We are here to watch the current Vice President open envelopes and receive the news of a verdict that has already been rendered. It is a solemn and august occasion, no doubt, but it is a formality.

The Congress does not determine the outcome of elections; the people do. The Congress is not endowed with the power to administer elections; our States are given that power.

By the end of the proceedings today, there will be confirmed once again something that is well known and well settled: The American people elected Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS to be the next President and Vice President of the United States. Yet a number of our colleagues have organized an effort to undermine and object to that free and fair election. They are in the minority. They will lose; they know that. They have no evidence of widespread voter fraud upon which to base their objections. That is because there is none. There is none, not brought before any of the courts successfully.

They know that President Trump and his allies have suffered a defeat in court after court across the country, losing no fewer than 62 legal challenges. And, I might add, many Republican-appointed judges—some appointed by President Trump—rendered those decisions.

They know—you all know—that Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS are going to be sworn in as President and Vice President of the United States on January 20, but they are going to object to the counting of the vote anyway, and in the process, they will embarrass themselves, they will embarrass their party, and worst of all, they will embarrass their country.

This insurrection was fortunately discouraged by the leadership of the majority party, but it was not quelled.

It is a very sad comment on our times that merely accepting the results of an election is considered an act of political courage. Sadder and more dangerous still is the fact that an element of the Republican Party believes their political viability hinges on the endorsement of an attempted coup, that anyone—much less an elected official—would be willing to tarnish our democracy in order to burnish their personal political fortunes.

Over the course of the afternoon and however far into the evening this band of Republic objectors wants to take us, Senators of good will from both sides of the aisle will explain why these challenges must be dismissed. The Senators from States whose electoral votes are being challenged will explain how the allegations of fraud are baseless. And a substantial bipartisan majority must vote to put down these objections and defend the sanctity of our elections and indeed—and indeed—our great and grand democracy because that is what we are talking about today: the health of power democracy, this wonderful, beautiful, grand democracy where the peaceful passing of the torch is extolled by schoolchildren in the second grade but not by some here.

As we speak, half of our voters are being conditioned by the outgoing President to believe that when his party loses an election, the results must not be legitimate.

As we speak, the eyes of the world are on this Chamber, questioning whether America is still the shining example of democracy, the shining city on the Hill.

What message will we send today to our people, to the world that has so looked up to us for centuries? What message will we send to fledgling democracies who study our Constitution, mirror our laws and traditions in the hopes that they, too, can build a country ruled by the consent of the governed?

What message will we send to those countries where democratic values are under assault and look to us to see if those values are still worth fighting for?

What message will we send to every dark corner of the world where human rights are betrayed, elections are stolen, human dignity denied?

What will we show those people? Will we show those people that there is a better way to ensure liberty and opportunity of humankind?

Sadly, a small band of Republican objectors may darken the view of our democracy today, but a larger group of Senators and House Members from both sides of the aisle can send a message, too; that democracy beats deep in the hearts of our citizens and our elected representatives; that we are a country of laws and of not men; that our traditions are not so easily discarded, even by our President; that facts matter; that truth matters; that while democracy allows free speech and free expression, even if that expression is

antidemocratic, there will always, always be—praise God—a far broader and stronger coalition ready to push back and defend everything we hold dear.

We can send that message today by voting in large and overwhelming numbers to defeat these objections. My colleagues, we each swore an oath just 3 days ago that we would defend and support the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that we would bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

We swore that we took this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that we could well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office we were about to enter, so help us God.

The precise words of that oath were shortly written after the Civil War, when the idea of true faith and allegiance to this country and its Constitution took on enormous meaning. Let those words ring in the ears of every Senator today. Let us do our duty to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, so help us God.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Texas, Senator CRUZ.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, we gather together at a moment of great division, at a moment of great passion. We have seen and, no doubt, will continue to see a great deal of moralizing from both sides of the aisle, but I would urge to both sides perhaps a bit less certitude and a bit more recognition that we are gathered at a time when democracy is in crisis.

Recent polling shows that 39 percent of Americans believe the election that just occurred “was rigged.” You may not agree with that assessment, but it is, nonetheless, a reality for nearly half the country.

I would note it is not just Republicans who believe that. Thirty-one percent of Independents agree with that statement. Seventeen percent of Democrats believe the election was rigged. Even if you do not share that conviction, it is the responsibility, I believe, of this office to acknowledge that is a profound threat to this country and to the legitimacy of any administrations that will come in the future.

I want to take a moment to speak to my Democratic colleagues. I understand. Your guy is winning right now. If Democrats vote as a bloc, Joe Biden will almost certainly be certified as the next President of the United States.

I want to speak to the Republicans who are considering voting against these objections. I understand your concerns, but I urge you to pause and think: What does it say to the nearly half the country that believes this election was rigged if we vote not even to

consider the claims of illegality and fraud in this election?

And I believe there is a better way. The leaders just spoke about setting aside the election. Let me be clear. I am not arguing for setting aside the result of this election. All of us are faced with two choices, both of which are lousy. One choice is vote against the objection, and tens of millions of Americans will see a vote against the objection as a statement that voter fraud doesn't matter, isn't real, and shouldn't be taken seriously. And a great many of us don't believe that.

On the other hand, most, if not all, of us believe we should not set aside the results of an election just because our candidate may not have prevailed. So I endeavored to look for door No. 3, a third option, and for that I looked to history, to the precedent of the 1876 election, the Hayes-Tilden election, where this Congress appointed an electoral commission to examine claims of voter fraud.

Five House Members, five Senators, five Supreme Court Justices examined the evidence and rendered a judgment. What I would urge of this body is that we do the same; that we appoint an electoral commission to conduct a 10-day emergency audit, consider the evidence, and resolve the claims.

For those in the Democratic aisle who say there is no evidence, they have been rejected, then you should rest in comfort. If that is the case, an electoral commission would reject those claims.

But for those who respect the voters, simply telling the voters, “Go jump in a lake; the fact that you have deep concerns is of no moment to us,” that jeopardizes, I believe, the legitimacy of this and subsequent elections.

The Constitution gives to Congress the responsibility this day to count the votes. The Framers knew what they were doing when they gave responsibilities to Congress. We have a responsibility, and I would urge that we follow the precedent of 1877. The Electoral Count Act explicitly allows objections such as this one for votes that were not regularly given.

Let me be clear. This objection is for the State of Arizona, but it is broader than that. It is an objection for all six of the contested States to have a credible, objective, impartial body hear the evidence and make a conclusive determination. That would benefit both sides. That would improve the legitimacy of this election.

So let me urge my colleagues: All of us take our responsibility seriously. I would urge my colleagues: Don't take, perhaps, the easy path, but, instead, act together. Astonish the viewers and act in a bipartisan sense to say we will have a credible and fair tribunal, consider the claims, consider the facts, consider the evidence, and make a conclusive determination whether and to what extent this election complied with the Constitution and with Federal law.

Mr. SCHUMER. Senator KLOBUCHAR. The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I first would like to say I appreciate the words of our leader, Senator SCHUMER, as well as Senator MCCONNELL's call for a higher calling.

January 6 is not typically a day of historical significance for our country. For centuries, this day is simply the day that we receive each State's certified electoral votes, and it has come and gone without much fanfare.

In fact, this is only the third time in 120 years that the Senate has gathered to debate an objection, and as Senator CRUZ well knows, both times these objections were resoundingly defeated. The last time the vote was 74 to 1.

Why? Because Senators have long believed that they should not mess around with the will of the people. They have understood the words of our great former colleague John McCain from the State of Arizona, who once said that nothing in life is more liberating than to fight for a cause larger than yourself.

In this case, my colleagues, our cause, despite our political differences, is to preserve our American democracy, to preserve our Republic because, as someone once said long ago, it is a republic if you can keep it.

Now, I appreciate all my Democratic and Republican colleagues who have joined our ranks of coup fighters, who have stood up for our democracy, who stand tall for our Republic, and who believe in an ideal greater than ourselves, larger than our political parties. That ideal is America.

And Senator CRUZ, he knows this: On January 20, Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS will be sworn in as President and Vice President of the United States. He knows that President-Elect Biden won more votes than any President in history and more than 7 million more votes than President Trump.

Despite the unfounded conspiracy theories Senator CRUZ tells, he knows that high-ranking officials in President Trump's own Homeland Security Department have concluded that the 2020 election was "the most secure in American history."

If he wants to improve the numbers in his own party that he just mentioned of people believing in our elections, maybe he should start consulting with them or maybe he should start consulting with former Attorney General Barr, who said that he has found no evidence of widespread fraud in the 2020 election.

We don't have to go back to 1877, my colleagues. Senator CRUZ knows that 80 judges, including conservative judges, including judges confirmed in this Chamber, nominated by President Trump, have thrown out these lawsuits, calling them baseless, inadequate, and contrary both to the plain meaning of the constitutional text and common sense.

And he knows that all 10 living Defense Secretaries, including both of

Trump's Defense Secretaries—Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, William Cohen—he knows that all of these leaders have come together to say that these scurrilous attacks on our democracy must stop and we must allow for a peaceful transition of power.

Senator SINEMA will fill you in on the specific facts as to why this election was sound and true in Arizona, but a summary: President Trump received 1,661,686 votes in the State; President-Elect Biden won 1,672,143 votes, meaning that he won the State by 10,457 votes.

On November 30, after Arizona's Republican Governor, the secretary of state, the attorney general, and the conservative chief justice of the Arizona Supreme Court certified the results of the election, the Governor actually said:

We do elections well here in Arizona. The system is strong.

Eight postelection lawsuits brought in Arizona to challenge the results were dismissed by judges. Nine Members of the House from Arizona were elected in the same election, including four Republicans. Colleagues, I did not see Senator CRUZ over at the swearing-in at the House of Representatives last Sunday asking for an audit. He did not stop their swearing-in because there was no fraud, and he did not ask for an audit because we had a fair election.

I will end with this. My friend ROY BLUNT, my fellow Rules Committee leader, many years ago found a statue, a bust of a man at the top of a bookcase. He did research. He went to the historians. All he could find out was that no one knew who this guy was except that he was a cleric. Hence, the statue is called "The Unknown Cleric."

Now, at the time, our leaders thought this man important enough that they would warrant a statue for him, but today no one knows who he is. Senator BLUNT's message to schoolkids and Senators alike that visit his office, when he shows them the statue: What we do here is more important than who we are.

Senators, what matters is not our futures, not our own short-term destinies.

What matters is our democracy's destiny because I think many of us know people will not know who we are 100 years from now or 200 years from now, but what they will know is this: They will know what we did today, how we voted today. That is more important than who we are. It is a Republic, if we can keep it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. I intend later to address the specifics of Pennsylvania if and when an objection is raised in regard to Pennsylvania.

For now, I want to address my remarks to what I think is the fundamental question being posed by the objectors, and that is, does Congress have the constitutional authority to decide which States' electoral college votes should be counted and which should not based on how well we think they ran their elections? This is what the objectors are really asking us to do—to federalize elections by rejecting electoral college votes from States whose processes they say they disapprove of and thereby having Congress select the President of the United States instead of the American people.

The answer, Mr. President, is no, there is no such authority under the Constitution. The Constitution assigns to the States the responsibility to conduct elections. It is clear in article II, section 1. It leaves courts with the responsibility to adjudicate disputes, and it assigns to Congress the ministerial function of counting ballots, except for extreme circumstances, such as when a State sends competing slates of electors to Congress, which brings me to the 1877 President.

Some objectors claim to merely want a commission to conduct an audit and then let States decide whether to send electors. Well, first, the situations are not at all analogous.

In 1877, Congress had before it two slates of electors from several States. There are no Trump electors from swing States; there are just Biden electors.

Second, legislators from the swing States—they have already spoken. They have made their decision. They have chosen not to send us alternative electors.

Third, a commission—really? It is completely impractical, and we all know it, with 14 days to go before a constitutionally mandated inauguration.

Look at it this way: If the electors are right and it is Congress's job to sit in judgment on the worthiness of the States' electoral processes, what is the criteria for acceptable electoral processes? What investigations have been conducted of these processes? What body has deemed that certain States' processes are unacceptable? What opportunities were these States given to challenge the findings? Why are the objectors objecting only to swing States that President Trump lost? What about the ones he won? I don't know—North Carolina? What about California? They have ballot harvesting, I am told. If this is all supposed to be Congress's job, you would think we would have answers to these questions and procedures in place because we would have done this every 4 years, right? But we don't because it is not our job.

If we adopt this new precedent that we sit in judgment of States' processes, then we are federalizing the election law. We would necessarily have to establish the permissible criteria and rules for the States' elections.

The ballot harvesting example—it is illegal in some States; it is encouraged

in others. Does it become mandatory or forbidden depending on who is in control of Congress? And, as the leader pointed out, it would be the end of the electoral college. The electoral college is the mechanism by which the people select the President. But if Congress gets to decide which States get to vote in the electoral college, then clearly Congress is electing the President, not the people. Whichever party controls both Houses of Congress would control the Presidency.

The public would never tolerate Congress picking the President instead of themselves, so they would abolish the electoral college, as many of our colleagues would like to do, and the end of the electoral college, of course, means the Nation will be governed by a handful of big blue States and regions that can drum up very large numbers.

Mr. President, the Constitution does not assign to Congress the responsibility to judge the worthiness of State election processes nor its adherence to its rules. That is the responsibility of the States and the courts.

Let me conclude with this. I voted for President Trump. I publicly endorsed President Trump. I campaigned for President Trump. I did not want Joe Biden to win this election. There is something more important to me than having my preferred candidate sworn in as the next President, and that is to have the American people's chosen candidate sworn in as the next President.

A fundamental defining feature of a democratic republic is the right of the people to elect their own leaders. It is now our duty. It is our responsibility to ensure that right is respected in this election and preserved for future elections. I urge you to vote against this objection.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the Senator from the great State of Arizona, Senator SINEMA.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Arizona.

Ms. SINEMA. Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise today to share the facts about Arizona's recent election and to urge my colleagues to step away from divisive political rhetoric and step towards renewing Americans' faith in our democracy.

The 2020 Arizona election was a success, not for any one party or individual but as a demonstration of the will of the voters. A record 80 percent of registered voters participated, thanks to local Arizona election officials who ensured our system worked and our laws were upheld. Arizona has offered early voting for more than 100 years, and our vote-by-mail system includes strict safeguards. All ballots include tracking mechanisms and tamper-resistant envelopes. Election staff are trained to authentic signatures. And Arizona imposes severe criminal punishments for ballot tampering.

The Arizona election produced bipartisan results in which members of both

parties won races, and these results have been confirmed by stakeholders across the political spectrum.

The Republican chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors said:

No matter how you voted, this election was administered with integrity, transparency, and . . . in accordance with Arizona State laws.

The Republican speaker of the Arizona State House rejected calls for the legislature to overturn the election, saying:

As a conservative Republican, I don't like the results of the presidential election . . . but I cannot and will not entertain a suggestion that we violate current law to change the outcome.

Eight challenges contesting the Arizona election were brought to Federal and State courts. All eight were withdrawn or dismissed, including a unanimous ruling by the Arizona Supreme Court. The chief justice wrote:

[The] challenge fails to present any evidence of "misconduct," [or] "illegal votes" . . . let alone establish any degree of fraud or a sufficient error rate that would undermine the certainty of the election results.

During a recent committee hearing, I asked a simple question of the former Director of Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security: Did he find any evidence disputing the integrity or fairness of Arizona's election? His answer was simple: "No."

Arizona and our 15 counties should be congratulated for running a secure election. Perhaps the most heartening demonstration of Arizona's election success is Jocelyn from Phoenix. Jocelyn is 18 years old and was a first-time voter in 2020. So was Rachel from Tucson and thousand more Arizonans who for the first time exercised their constitutional right to decide their own leaders. Today's challenge to Arizona's election fails any factual analysis. More disturbingly, it seeks to rob Jocelyn and Rachel and more than 3 million Arizonans of a free, fair election.

Those of us who are trusted with elected office are first and foremost public servants. We serve our constituents. We do not seek to substitute our personal ambitions for the will of the American people. Our system allows for a continuous contest of ideas. And those voters who support the losing side of a free, fair election have not been disenfranchised; rather, they maintain just as important a voice in America's future. Leaders have a duty to serve all of our constituents, including those who voted for other candidates.

Great leaders in our history faced the choice of whether to take an action strengthening our democracy even if a different action would better serve their political ambitions. Many are revered today because they chose our Republic over their self-interests, including my personal hero, Senator John McCain. Following his Presidential loss, Senator McCain said:

The American people have spoken . . . Senator Obama and I have . . . argued our differences, and he has prevailed. . . . Whatever our differences, we are fellow Americans.

He spoke to the nearly 60 million Americans who voted for him, saying:

It is natural tonight to feel some disappointment, but tomorrow we must move beyond it and work together to get our country moving again.

Senator McCain was right.

Today we have serious, significant work to do beating this pandemic and reviving our economy. I urge my colleagues to follow the example of Senator John McCain and so many others, reject this meritless challenge, and uphold the will of Arizona's voters.

Thank you.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Oklahoma, Senator LANKFORD.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, in America, we settle our differences in elections. What happens if you don't trust the election count or you are concerned that so many courts denied or dismissed cases within hours after they were given thousands of pages of evidence?

The reason we have a Congress to settle our Nation's divisions and the rules of the Senate make sure that every opinion in the Nation is heard is so issues like this can be addressed.

The constitutional crisis in our country right now is that millions of Americans are being told to sit down and shut up. Their opinions matter.

During the electoral challenge on January 6, 2005, Senator Ted Kennedy stood on this floor and said this. He said:

I commend the many thousands of citizens in Massachusetts and other States who insisted that treating today's electoral vote count in Congress as a meaningless ritual would be an insult to our democracy unless we register our own protest against the obviously-flawed voting process that took place in so many States. We are hopeful that this major issue that goes to the heart of our democracy is now firmly implanted on the agenda for effective action by . . . Congress.

I agree. The U.S. Constitution does not allow me to assign different electors to a State, nor should it. The U.S. Constitution does not give the option to the Vice President of the United States to just unilaterally decide which States are in and out, and it should not. Each State decides its electors through its people.

A small group of Senators, including myself, have demanded that we not ignore the questions that millions of people are asking in our Nation, so we have proposed a constitutional solution. Pause the count. Get more facts to the States before January the 20th. We proposed a 15-member commission, just like what was done after the failed election of 1876. We are encouraging people to spend 10 days going through all the issues so States can have one

last opportunity to address any challenges. Then the States, as the Constitution directs, would make the final decision on their electors.

I have some colleagues who have said that a 10-day commission is not enough time, so they have counterproposed just ignoring the lingering questions.

We need to do something.

(Mr. GRASSLEY assumed the Chair.)

Mr. LANKFORD. My challenge today is not about the good people of Arizona.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 2:13 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 8:06 p.m. when called to order by the Vice President of the United States.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Vice President, as President of the Senate, would like to give a brief statement with the indulgence of the Senate.

Today was a dark day in the history of the United States Capitol, but thanks to the swift efforts of U.S. Capitol Police, Federal, State, and local law enforcement, the violence was quelled, the Capitol is secured, and the people's work continues.

We condemn the violence that took place here in the strongest possible terms. We grieve the loss of life that took place in these hallowed Halls, as well as the injuries suffered by those who defended our Capitol today. And we will always be grateful to the men and women who stayed at their posts to defend this historic place.

To those who wreaked havoc in our Capitol today, you did not win. Violence never wins. Freedom wins. And this is still the People's House.

As we reconvene in this Chamber, the world will again witness the resilience and strength of our democracy, for even in the wake of unprecedented violence and vandalism at this Capitol, the elected representatives of the people of the United States have assembled again on the very same day to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

May God bless the lost, the injured, and the heroes forged on this day. May God bless all who serve here and those who protect this place. And may God bless the United States of America.

Let's get back to work.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader and the Democratic leader be allowed to speak and that the time not count against the 2 hours of debate in relation to the objection raised on the State of Arizona.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I want to say to the American people, the United States Senate will not be intimidated.

We will not be kept out of this Chamber by thugs, mobs, or threats. We will not bow to lawlessness or intimidation.

We are back at our posts. We will discharge our duty under the Constitution and for our Nation, and we are going to do it tonight.

This afternoon, Congress began the process of honoring the will of the American people and counting the electoral college votes. We have fulfilled this solemn duty every 4 years for more than two centuries. Whether our Nation has been at war or at peace, under all manner of threats, even during an ongoing armed rebellion and the Civil War, the clockwork of our democracy has carried on.

The United States and the United States Congress have faced down much greater threats than the unhinged crowd we saw today. We have never been deterred before, and we will not be deterred today.

They tried to disrupt our democracy. They failed. They failed.

This failed attempt to obstruct the Congress, this failed insurrection, only underscores how crucial the task before us is for our Republic.

Our Nation was founded precisely so that the free choice of the American people is what shapes our self-government and determines the destiny of our Nation—not fear, not force, but the peaceful expression of the popular will.

We assembled this afternoon to count our citizens' votes and to formalize their choice of the next President. Now we are going to finish exactly what we started. We will complete this process the right way, by the book. We will follow our precedents, our laws, and our Constitution to the letter, and we will certify the winner of the 2020 Presidential election.

Criminal behavior will never dominate the United States Congress. This institution is resilient. Our democratic Republic is strong. The American people deserve nothing less.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it is very, very difficult to put into words what has transpired today. I have never lived through or even imagined an experience like the one we have just witnessed in this Capitol. President Franklin Roosevelt set aside December 7, 1941, as a day that "will live in infamy." Unfortunately, we can now add January 6, 2021, to that very short list of dates in American history that will live forever in infamy.

This temple to democracy was desecrated, its windows smashed, and our offices vandalized. The world saw America's elected officials hurriedly ushered out because they were in harm's way. The House and Senate floor were places of shelter until the

evacuation was ordered, leaving rioters to stalk these hallowed Halls. Lawmakers and our staffs, average citizens who love their country and serve it every day, feared for their lives. I understand that one woman was shot and tragically lost her life. We mourn her and feel for her friends and family.

These images were projected to the world. Foreign Embassies cabled their home capitals to report on the harrowing scenes at the very heart of our democracy. This will be a stain on our country not so easily washed away—the final, terrible, indelible legacy of the 45th President of the United States and undoubtedly our worst.

I want to be very clear. Those who performed these reprehensible acts cannot be called protestors. No, these were rioters and insurrectionists, goons and thugs, domestic terrorists. They do not represent America. These were a few thousand violent extremists who tried to take over the Capitol Building and attack our democracy. They must and should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, hopefully, by this administration; if not, certainly by the next. They should be provided no leniency.

I want to thank the many in the Capitol Hill Police and Secret Service and local police who kept us safe today and worked to clear the Capitol and return it to its rightful owners and its rightful purpose. I want to thank the leaders, Democratic and Republican, House and Senate. It was Speaker PELOSI, Leader MCCONNELL, Leader MCCARTHY, and myself who came together and decided that these thugs would not succeed and that we would finish the work that our Constitution requires us to complete in the very legislative Chambers of the House and Senate that were desecrated but we know always belong to the people and do again tonight.

But make no mistake—make no mistake, my friends—today's events did not happen spontaneously. The President who promoted the conspiracy theories that motivated these thugs, the President who exhorted them to come to our Nation's Capital egged them on. He hardly ever discourages violence and more often encourages it. This President bears a great deal of the blame.

This mob was, in good part, President Trump's doing, incited by his words and his lies. This violence, in good part, is his responsibility and his everlasting shame. Today's events certainly—certainly—would not have happened without him.

Now January 6 will go down as one of the darkest days in recent American history—a final warning to our Nation about the consequences of a demagogic President, the people who enable him, the captive media that parrot his lies, and the people who follow him as he attempts to push America to the brink of ruin.

As we reconvene tonight, let us remember, in the end, all this mob has really accomplished is to delay our

work by a few hours. We will resume our responsibilities now, and we will finish our task tonight. The House and Senate Chambers will be restored good as new and ready for legislating in short order.

The counting of the electoral votes is our sacred duty. Democracy's roots in this Nation are deep; they are strong; and they will not be undone, ever, by a group of thugs. Democracy will triumph, as it has for centuries.

So to my fellow Americans who were shocked and appalled by the images on their televisions today and who are worried about the future of this country, let me speak to you directly. The divisions in our country clearly run deep, but we are a resilient, forward-looking, and optimistic people. And we will begin the hard work of repairing this Nation tonight because here in America we do hard things. In America, we always overcome our challenges.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. Vice President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Oklahoma, Senator LANKFORD.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. Vice President, you said things more eloquently than how we say it in Oklahoma. In Oklahoma, we say something like: Why in God's name would someone think attacking law enforcement and occupying the United States Capitol is the best way to show that you are right? Why would you do that?

Rioters and thugs don't run the Capitol. We are the United States of America. We disagree on a lot of things, and we have a lot of spirited debate in this room, but we talk it out, and we honor each other, even in our disagreements. That person, that person, and that person is not my enemy. That is my fellow American. And while we disagree on things, and disagree strongly at times, we do not encourage what happened today—ever.

Now, I want to join my fellow Senators in saying thank you to the Capitol Hill Police, the law enforcement, the National Guard, the Secret Service who stood in harm's way. While we were here debating, they were pushing back. And I was literally interrupted mid-sentence speaking here because we were all unaware of what was happening right outside this room because of their faithfulness and because of what they have done. I want to thank them.

Ronald Reagan once said: Peace is not the absence of conflict. It is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.

The peaceful people in my State of Oklahoma want their questions answered, but they don't want this, what happened today. They want to do the right thing, and they also want to do it the right way. They want to honor the constitutional process, but they also

want to have debate about election security because they want to make sure it is right, which is why it is an important issue that still needs to be resolved.

Transparency in government just doesn't seem like a bad idea. Obviously, the Commission that we have asked for is not going to happen at this point, and I understand that. And we are headed tonight toward the certification of Joe Biden to be the President of the United States, and we will work together in this body to be able to set a peaceful example in the days ahead.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from Nevada, Senator CORTEZ MASTO.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. Vice President, I know that this room is full of leaders of both parties who love this country, and many believe that for America to succeed, our politics must find common ground. That has never been clearer than today, when armed rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol, emboldened by President Trump's false and inflammatory rhetoric about the 2020 elections.

I believe that we, in this Chamber, have a special duty as leaders to work together to lower the temperature of our politics, and I hope that my colleagues, who have questioned the legitimacy of this election in Arizona and all of these other States, now see the dire and dangerous consequences of sowing doubt and uncertainty.

I also know that, as U.S. Senators, we all take solemnly the oath we swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. At this moment in history, I can think of nothing more patriotic than renewing our faith in the Charters of Freedom that our Founding Fathers crafted for our Republic, starting with the fundamental American principle in our Declaration of Independence that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

The people have spoken in this election, and our only job here today is to do what they ask. It is not to argue election security. That is not the place for what we are doing today.

Our Constitution specifically reserves to the people the right to meet in their respective States and vote for the President and Vice President. As a result, individual States oversee and implement the election process, not the Federal Government.

To guard against fraud or irregularities in the voting process, the States are required to have robust election security measures. Likewise, State legislatures have the opportunity to examine evidence of voter fraud before they certify their electoral college votes. And our courts—from district courts to the United States Supreme Court—adjudicate legal challenges and election

disputes. All of those things happened after the 2020 election.

Statehouses and courts across the country took allegations of voter fraud seriously and followed the constitutional process to hear challenges to this year's election. No State found evidence of any widespread voter fraud and neither did any court ask to review the State's findings.

In Arizona, Republican Governor Doug Ducey; the Democratic secretary of state, Katie Hobbs; the Republican attorney general, Mark Brnovich; and the State supreme court chief justice, Robert Brutinel all certified the results of the election on November 30.

And we know—we have heard—Arizonans have been voting by mail for almost 30 years, and Governor Ducey has expressed confidence in the State's process numerous times. In November, he said:

We do elections well here in Arizona. The system is strong, and that is why I have bragged on it so much.

He further stated:

We have some of the strongest election laws in the country, laws that prioritize accountability and clearly lay out our procedures for conducting, canvassing and even contesting the results.

And they are right. Arizona has one of the most transparent election processes in the country with built-in accountability, starting with the internal auditing.

We have heard unfounded allegations that voting machines in Arizona and elsewhere somehow changed vote tallies or somehow improperly rejected ballots while claiming to accept them. These allegations all ignore the fact that Arizona counties conducted ballot audits by hand to double-check the machine counts, and these audits found no widespread fraud or irregularities.

Maricopa County, the county where more than 60 percent of the State's population resides, conducted a post-election hand count audit in the week after the election, which showed perfect, 100 percent, accuracy in the machine tabulations. So why would we need, my colleagues, to call for a 10-day emergency audit to be conducted by a legislative commission when it has already been done by the State of Arizona? What happened to State's rights?

The audit involved checking ballots for the Presidential election but also ballots for Federal and State legislative elections. The audit report shows every precinct's machine and hand count totals for each of the races audited, and for every single race in every precinct, the difference between the hand count and the machine count was zero. Maricopa's audit report stated: No discrepancies were found by the hand count audit boards.

Seeking to find any reason to contest these results, some of the State Republicans then tried to claim that Maricopa County failed to follow State law in conducting this audit by selecting voting center locations to audit instead of voting precincts. This was

wrong. And this, too, went to a court. In rejecting this claim, the State court in Arizona found that the county followed the properly issued guidance on hand audit procedures from the Arizona Secretary of State. And the court found that Maricopa County officials, therefore, could not lawfully have performed the hand count audit the way the plaintiffs wanted it done. If they had done so, they would have exposed themselves to criminal punishment.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator's 5 minutes has expired.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. I would close by just saying, please, my colleagues, do not disenfranchise the voters of Arizona and certify their votes tonight.

Thank you.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. Vice President, I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Utah, Senator LEE.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. Vice President, from the time I prepared my remarks for today, it seems like a lifetime ago. A lot has changed in the last few hours. So I am going to deliver some of the same remarks, but it has a little bit of a different feel than it would have just a few hours ago.

My thoughts and prayers go out to the family members of those who have been injured or killed today. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to the Capitol Hill Police who valiantly defended our building and our lives.

While it is true that legitimate concerns have been raised with regard to how some of the key battleground States conducted their Presidential elections, this is not the end of the story. We each have to remember that we swore an oath to uphold, protect, and defend this document, written nearly two and a half centuries ago by wise men raised up by God for that very purpose. That document makes clear what our role is and what it isn't. It makes clear who does what when it comes to deciding Presidential elections.

You see, because in our system of government, Presidents are not directly elected. They are chosen by Presidential electors, and the Constitution makes very clear, under article II, section 1, that the States shall appoint Presidential electors according to procedures that their legislatures develop. Then comes the 12th Amendment. It explains what we are doing here today in the Capitol. It explains that the President of the Senate—the Vice President of the United States—shall open the ballots, “and the votes shall then be counted.” It is those words that confine, define, and constrain every scrap of authority that we have in this process.

Our job is to open and then count. Open, then count—that is it. That is all there is.

There are, of course, rare instances—instances in which multiple slates of

electors can be submitted by the same State. That doesn't happen very often. It happened in 1960. It happened in 1876. Let's hope it doesn't ever happen again. In those rare moments, Congress has to make a choice. It has to decide which of the electoral votes will be counted and which will not. That did not happen here—thank heavens—and let's hope that it never does.

Many of my colleagues have raised objections or had previously stated their intent to raise objections with regard to these. I have spent an enormous time on this issue over the last few weeks. I have met with lawyers on both sides of the issue, and I have met with lawyers representing the Trump campaign, reading everything I can find about the constitutional provisions in question, and I have spent a lot of time on the phone with legislators and other leaders from the contested States. I didn't initially declare my position because I didn't yet have one.

I wanted to get the facts first, and I wanted to understand what was happening. I wanted to give the people serving in government in the contested States the opportunity to do whatever they felt they needed to do to make sure that their election was properly reflected. I spent an enormous amount of time reaching out to State government officials in those States, but in none of the contested States—no, not even one—did I discover any indication that there was any chance that any State legislature or secretary of state or Governor or Lieutenant Governor had any intention to alter the slate of electors. That being the case, our job is a very simple one.

This simply isn't how our Federal system is supposed to work. That is to say, if you have concerns with the way that an election in the Presidential race was handled in your State, the appropriate response is to approach your State legislatures, first and foremost.

These protests—hearing from those who have raised concerns—should have been focused on their State capitols, not the Nation's Capitol, because our role is narrow, our role is defined, our role is limited.

Yes, we are the election judges when it comes to Members elected to our own body. And, yes, the House of Representatives are the judges of their own races there.

We also have the authority to prescribe, as a Congress, rules governing the time, place, and manner of elections for Senators and Representatives. There is no corresponding authority with respect to Presidential elections—none whatsoever. It doesn't exist. Our job is to convene, to open the ballots, and to count them. That is it.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from Colorado, Mr. BENNET.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Colleagues, it has been a terrible day for everybody here and for our country.

One of the things I was thinking about today is something I often think about when I am on this floor, which is that the Founders of this country, the people who wrote our Constitution, actually knew our history better than we know our history.

I was thinking about that history today, as we saw the mob riot in Washington, DC—thinking about what the Founders were thinking about when they wrote our Constitution, which was what happened to the Roman Republic when armed gangs, doing the work for politicians, prevented Rome from casting their ballots for consuls, for praetors, for senators. These were the officers in Rome, and these armed gangs ran through the streets of Rome, keeping elections from being started, keeping elections from ever being called. In the end, because of that, the Roman Republic fell, and a dictator took its place, and that was the end of the Roman Republic—or any republic, for that matter—until this beautiful Constitution was written in the United States of America.

So it is my fervent hope that the way we respond to this today, my dear colleagues, is that we give the biggest bipartisan vote we can in support of our democracy and in support of our Constitution and in rejection of what we saw today and what the Roman Republic saw in its own time.

There is a tendency around this place, I think, to always believe that we are the first people to confront something when that is seldom the case and to underappreciate what the effect of our actions will be. We need to deeply appreciate, in this moment, our obligation to the Constitution, our obligation to democracy, and our obligation to the Republic.

There are people in this Chamber who have twisted the words—twisted the words—of a statute written in the 19th century that was meant to actually settle our electoral disputes, to leave them with the States, as the Senator from Utah was saying, to give us a ministerial role, except in very rare circumstances. That is what that law is about that the Senator of Texas was talking about today. And that is the law that is leading us to be asked to overturn the judgments of 60 courts in America, many of the courts in Arizona, some of whom have howled the President's lawyers out of the courtrooms because there is no evidence of fraud.

By the way, the fact that 37 percent or 39 percent of Americans think there is evidence of fraud does not mean there is fraud. If you have turned a blind eye to a conspiracy theory, you can't now come to the floor of the Senate and say you are ignoring the people who believe that the election was stolen. Go out there and tell them the truth, which is that every single Member of this Senate knows this election

wasn't stolen and that we, just as in the Roman Republic, have a responsibility to protect the independence of the judiciary from politicians who will stop at nothing to hold on to power. There is nothing new about that either. That has been true since the first republic was founded.

So now we find ourselves in the position, just days after many Senators here swore an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution—every single Member of the House of Representatives swore the same oath, as well, and I think we have a solemn obligation and responsibility here to prove, once again, that this country is a nation of laws and not of men, and the only result that we can reach together is one that rejects the claim of the Senator from Texas and the other Members of the House and Senate who seek to overturn the decisions that have been made by the States, by the voters in these States, and by the courts.

If we follow what they have proposed, we will be the ones who will have disenfranchised every single person who cast a vote in this election, whether they voted for the President or they didn't.

I urge you to reject this, and I deeply appreciate the opportunity to serve with every single one of you.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Georgia, Senator LOEFFLER.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Georgia.

Mrs. LOEFFLER. Mr. President, when I arrived in Washington this morning, I fully intended to object to the certification of the electoral votes. However, the events that have transpired today have forced me to reconsider, and I cannot now, in good conscience, object to the certification of these electors.

The violence, the lawlessness, and siege of the Halls of Congress are abhorrent and stand as a direct attack on the very institution my objection was intended to protect: the sanctity of the American democratic process. And I thank law enforcement for keeping us safe.

I believe that there were last-minute changes to the November 2020 election process and serious irregularities that resulted in too many Americans losing confidence not only in the integrity of our elections but in the power of the ballot as a tool of democracy. Too many Americans are frustrated at what they see as an unfair system. Nevertheless, there is no excuse for the events that took place in these Chambers today, and I pray that America never suffers such a dark day again.

Though the fate of this vote is clear, the future of the American people's faith in the core institution of this democracy remains uncertain. We as a body must turn our focus to protecting

the integrity of our elections and restoring every American's faith that their voice and their vote matter.

America is a divided country with serious differences, but it is still the greatest country on Earth. There can be no disagreement that upholding democracy is the only path to preserving our Republic.

I yield the floor.

(Applause.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield 2½ minutes to Senator BOOKER and 2½ minutes to Senator Kaine, in reverse order.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President and my colleagues, I applaud the comments of my colleague from Georgia deeply.

My first job after school was in Macon, GA, working for a Federal judge, Lanier Anderson. I learned a lot about integrity and a lot about law from him. I also learned some sad lessons, that in the history of Georgia—and, indeed, Virginia and many States—so many people, especially people of color, had been disenfranchised over the course of our history. Our late friend, John Lewis, a Congressman from Georgia, was savagely beaten on Bloody Sunday just for marching for voting rights. That act of violence inspired this body, the U.S. Senate, to come together in March of 1965 and work to pass, in a bipartisan fashion, the Voting Rights Act.

We should be coming together today—after acts of violence—as a U.S. Senate, to affirm the votes of all who cast ballots in November. Instead, we are contemplating an unprecedented objection that would be a massive disenfranchisement of American voters.

The Georgia result was very clear: a 12,000-vote margin, 2 certifications by Republican officials, 4 separate recounts and canvases, 7 lawsuits, as in the other States. If we object to results like this, the message is so clear. We are saying to States: No matter how secure and accurate your elections are, we will gladly overthrow them if we don't like who you voted for. But, more importantly, what we will be saying—really, what we will be doing—is as the body that acted together to guarantee Americans the right to vote, we will become the agent of one of the most massive disenfranchisements in the history of this country.

So I urge all of my colleagues: Please oppose these objections.

Thank you.

I yield to my colleague from New Jersey.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. Vice President, I can only think of two times in American history that individuals laid siege to our Capitol, stormed our sacred civic spaces, and tried to upend and overrun this government. One was in the War of 1812, and the other one was today.

What is interesting about the parallel between the two is they both were waving flags to a sole sovereign, to an individual, surrendering democratic principles to the cult of personality. One was a monarch in England, and the other were the flags I saw all over our Capitol, including in the hallways and in this room, to a single person named Donald Trump.

The sad difference between these two times is one was yet another nation in the history of our country that tried to challenge the United States of America, but this time, we brought this hell upon ourselves.

My colleague from Texas said that this was a moment where there were unprecedented allegations of voter fraud. Yes, that is true. They were unprecedented when the President, before the election even happened, said: If I lose this election, then the election was rigged.

That is unprecedented. It is unprecedented that, before the night of the counting of the vote was even done, that he called it rigged. It is unprecedented that he is fanning the flames of conspiracy theory to create a smoke-screen in this Nation to cover what he is trying to do, which is undermine our democratic principles.

But it is not just that. The shame of this day is it is being aided and abetted by good Americans who are falling prey, who are choosing Trump over truth, who are surrendering to the passion of lies as opposed to standing up and speaking truth to power, who are trying to fundraise off of the shame of conspiracy theories as opposed to doing the incalculably valuable, patriotic thing: to speak truth to our Nation. Our democracy is wounded, and I saw it when I saw pictures of yet another insurgency, of a flag of another group of Americans who tried to challenge our Nation. I saw the flag of the Confederacy there.

What will we do? How will we confront this shame? How will we confront this dark second time in American history? I pray that we remember a Georgian and his words. All I can say is we must, in spirit, join together like those Georgians on a bridge called the Edmund Pettus, who joined hands, who were called threats to our democracy, who were called outrageous epithets when they sought to expand our democracy, to save it, to heal it—when they joined arm in arm and said what we should say now, commit ourselves to that ideal, that together, we shall overcome.

(Applause.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. Vice President, I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Nebraska, Mr. SASSE.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. Vice President, I want to say, before we begin, thank you for the way you have fulfilled your constitutional duties and your oath of

office today. Obviously, it hasn't been easy.

Colleagues, today has been ugly. When I came to the floor this morning, I planned to talk about the lesson of 1801 because I am kind of a history nerd, and I wanted to celebrate the glories of the peaceful transition of power across our Nation's history. It feels a little naive now to talk about ways that American civics might be something that could unite us and bring us back together.

Now, 1801 blew everybody's mind all over the world, by the way. John Adams loses to Thomas Jefferson, and Adams willingly leaves the Executive mansion and moves back to Massachusetts, and Jefferson peacefully assumes power. People all over Europe said: That must be fake news. Those must be bad reports. There is no way any Executive would ever willingly lay down power. Yet Adams, in defeat, did something glorious to give all of us a gift.

I wanted to celebrate that, and it feels a little bit harder now. This building has been desecrated. Blood has been spilled in the hallways. I was with octogenarian Members of this Chamber who needed to have troops and police stabilize them to get down the stairs at a time when a lot of our staffs were panicked and under their desks and not knowing what was going to happen to them.

It was ugly today. But you know what? It turns out that when something is ugly, talking about beauty isn't just permissible; talking about beauty is obligatory in a time like that. Why? Why would we talk about beauty after the ugliness of today? Because our kids need to know that this isn't what America is. What happened today isn't what America is.

They have been given a glorious inheritance for the 59th Presidential election. If the Vice President wasn't in the Chair and if the President pro tempore was, I would have made some joke that CHUCK GRASSLEY has voted in two-thirds of those 59 Presidential elections. He is laughing. It is not as good as "hit deer, deer dead," but it still got a Grassley laugh.

I don't think we want to tell the Americans that come after us that this republic is broken, that this is just a banana republic, that our institutions can't be trusted. I don't think we want that. We don't want that in this body, and we don't want that in our hometowns. I don't think we want to tell our kids that America's best days are behind us—because it is not true. That is not who we are. America isn't Hatfields' and McCoys' blood feud forever. America is a union.

There is a lot that is broken in this country but not anything that is so big that the American people can't rebuild it, that freedom and community and entrepreneurial effort and that neighborhoods can't rebuild. Nothing that is broken is so big that we can't fix it.

Generations of our forefathers and our foremothers—probably not a

word—and our ancestors have spilled blood to defend the glories of this republic. Why would they do that? Because America is the most exceptional nation in the history of the world and because the Constitution is the greatest political document that has ever been written. Most governments in the past have said might makes right, and we saw some of that hooligan nuttery today. Might makes right. No, it doesn't.

God gives us rights by nature, and government is just our shared project to secure those rights. America has always been about what we choose to do together, the way we reaffirm our constitutional system. We have some governmental tasks, and we all in this body could do better at those governmental tasks, but the heart of America is not government. The center of America is not Washington, DC.

The center of America is the neighborhoods where 330 million Americans are raising their kids and trying to put food on the table and trying to love their neighbor. That is the center of America.

We are not supposed to be the most important people in America. We are supposed to be servant leaders who try to maintain a framework for ordered liberty so that there is a structure that, back home where they live, they can get from the silver-framed structure and order to the golden apple at the center, as Washington would have said, which is the things that they build together, the places where they coach little league, the places where they invite people to synagogue or church.

Sometimes, the biggest things we do together are governmental, like kicking Hitler's ass or like going to the moon. Sometimes, there is governmental stuff. But the heart of America is about places where moms and dads are raising kids, and we are supposed to serve them by maintaining order and by rejecting violence. You can't do big things like that if you hate your neighbors. You can't do big things together as Americans if you think other Americans are the enemy.

Look, there is a lot of uncertainty about the future. I get it. There is a lot that does need to be rebuilt. But if you are angry—I want to beg you—don't let the screamers who monetize hate have the final word. Don't let needlists become your drug dealers. There are some who want to burn it all down. We met some of them today.

But they aren't going to win. Don't let them be your prophets—instead, organize, persuade, but most importantly, love your neighbor. Visit the widower down the street who is lonely and doesn't want to tell anybody that his wife died and he doesn't have a lot of friends. Shovel somebody's driveway. You can't hate somebody who just shoveled your driveway.

The heart of life is about community and neighborhood, and we are supposed to be servant leaders. The constitu-

tional system is still the greatest order for any government ever, and it is our job to steward it and protect it.

Let's remember that today when we vote.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Vice President, in March of 1861, a Springfield lawyer caught a train to Washington. His name was Abraham Lincoln. It wasn't his first trip there. He served as Congressman 15 years before and returned in the beginning of the Civil War to serve as President.

It was a different place than he knew as a Congressman. In 15 years, it had changed a lot. The Sprigg's boarding house across the street, which is now the Library of Congress, was gone. And this building was changing—big changes. They were building a dome on the Capitol. But they were also in the earliest days of war, and President Lincoln was counseled: Stop building the dome. It costs too much money. We can't spend any more time on it.

And he said: No. We are going to build that dome, and we are going to finish it. That dome and this building will be a symbol of this country that will survive this Civil War and come back strong.

So they built the dome. They won the war. And since those days, that dome and this building have been a symbol to this country, a symbol of unity and of hope.

Tours come through here—before COVID-19—by the tens of thousands. If you have ever noticed their tours, they are often shushed. People are saying: Show some respect for this building.

We know this building and the Rotunda as a place where some of the greatest American heroes of both political parties lie in state, and we go there to honor them. We know this building because we work here. We enact laws here that change America. We gather for State of the Union messages from Presidents and honor the people in the gallery.

This is a special place. This is a sacred place. But this sacred place was desecrated by a mob today, on our watch. This temple to democracy was defiled by thugs who roamed the halls and sat in that chair, Mr. Vice President, the one that you vacated at 2:15 this afternoon—sat and posed for pictures, those who were roaming around in this Chamber.

What brought this on? Did this mob spring spontaneously from America? No. This mob was invited to come to Washington on this day, by this President, for one reason: because he knew the electoral college vote was going to be counted this day. He wanted this mob to disrupt the constitutional process which we are part of. This mob was inspired by a President who cannot accept defeat.

If you wonder whether I am going too far in what I say, just read the transcript with the secretary of state from Georgia and listen to this President's wild conspiracy theories, one after the other, swatted down by that Republican-elected official and his attorney as having no basis in fact. This President begs, he coaxes, he even threatens that secretary of state to find the votes he needs. In any other venue, that would be a simple, obvious crime.

The lengths he will go to are obvious. The Texas Senator says to us: Well, many people still agree with him, you know, when it gets down to the bottom line. Many people have fallen for this Presidential position that it must have been a rigged election if I lost.

Well, I would say that after—we have lost count—57 lawsuits, 62 lawsuits—I have heard so many different numbers—after 90 different judges; after this President took his case, the best he could put together, to the highest Court in the land across the street, where he had personally chosen three Justices on the Supreme Court—and I say to the Senator from Texas that he knows much more about that Court than I do—I don't believe they let that paper that he sent up there even hit the desk before they laughed it out of the Court. And that is the best he had to offer—no evidence whatsoever of this rigged election and this fraudulence.

The Senator from Texas says: We just want to create a little commission, 10 days; we are going to audit all of the States—particularly the ones in contention here—and find out what actually occurred.

And it really draws its parallel to 1876, to Hayes and Tilden. Don't forget what that commission—that so-called political compromise—achieved. It was not just some ordinary governmental commission. It was a commission that killed reconstruction, that established Jim Crow, that—even after a civil war, which tore this Nation apart, it reenslaved African-Americans, and it was a commission that invited voter suppression we are still fighting today in America.

Let me close by saying this. The vote we are going to have here is a clear choice of whether we are going to feed the beast of ignorance or we are going to tell the truth to the American people. We saw that beast today roaming the halls. Let's not invite it back.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Kansas, Senator MARSHALL.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Thank you, Mr. President.

Freedom of speech and the freedom to protest are provided in our Constitution. While I share the same frustration many Americans have over the Presidential election, the violence and mob rule that occurred at the U.S. Cap-

itol today and across the country over the past year are unacceptable, and I condemn them at the highest level. Like all of us in the Chamber, I am thankful for the heroic law enforcement officers who worked feverishly to restore order so that we get back to the electoral certification process.

During my 29-year career as an obstetrician and gynecologist, too often I had to sit down with patients and give them a very bad diagnosis. It might have been a young mother of three whose three babies I delivered, now with metastatic breast cancer, or perhaps another woman with advanced cervical or ovarian cancer, all of which have very challenging prognoses. But before I sat down with each one of those patients, I carefully reviewed all the labs, their x rays, and the pathology to make sure I had the facts straight, but at the end of the day, my final recommendation was always going to be a recommendation from my heart.

I want my fellow Kansans and all Americans to know that I have given as much consideration and thought surrounding the issue of objecting to a State's electoral college votes as I did considering the treatment plan for a serious health concern, and today's decision once again is from my heart.

Mr. President, I rise today to restore integrity to our Republic, and I rise to do it knowing that many of our colleagues are all concerned for current and future generations. We must restore faith and confidence in one of our Republic's most hallowed and patriotic duties: voting.

There is no question our U.S. Constitution empowers State legislatures to execute free, legal, and fair elections. Unfortunately, in several States, the clear authority of those State legislatures to determine the rules for voting was usurped by Governors, secretaries of state, and activist courts. Our laws and Constitution should always be followed, especially in a time of crisis.

I don't rise to undo a State's legally obtained electoral college votes; rather, I rise in hopes of improving the integrity of the ballot to hold States accountable to the time-proven constitutional system of the electoral college.

This is why I urge the formation of an electoral commission to give constructive suggestions and recommendations that States can take to make our elections once again safe, free, and fair after a year of jarring irregularities.

We must and will have a peaceful transition of power.

To all my fellow Americans, I have no doubt that our Republic can grow stronger through this difficult day.

May God bless this great Republic.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The minority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from Illinois, Senator DUCKWORTH.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. In 2004, I packed up my rucksack, laced up my boots,

and deployed to Iraq, ready to sacrifice whatever was asked of me, all because I love this Nation—willing to sacrifice my life, if needed, because I believe in the sanctity of our electoral system, which had declared George W. Bush my Commander in Chief.

I earned my wounds proudly fighting in a war I did not support on the orders of a President I did not vote for because I believed in and I still do believe in the values of our Nation; because I believe in a government of, by, and for the people, where voters—voters—choose who leads them, not the other way around.

I have spent my entire adult life defending our democracy, but I never—never—thought it would be necessary to defend it from an attempted violent overthrow in our Nation's own Capitol Building. Well, I refuse to let anyone intent on instigating chaos or inciting violence deter me from carrying out my constitutional duties.

You know, when my Army buddies and I raised our right hands, when 45,000 troops in Arizona raised their right hands and swore to protect and defend the Constitution, we did not qualify our oaths by saying that we would follow orders only when the Commander in Chief was someone whose election we were happy with.

Just like when every Senator in this Chamber was sworn into office, we didn't mutter under our breath that we discharge our duties only when it served our political interests or helped us to avoid the wrath of a petty, insecure, wannabe tin-pot dictator on the precipice of losing power and relevance. No, there is no ambiguity here—Joe Biden won the election with a record number of votes. Republican officials nationwide confirmed those results, including in Arizona, as has judge after Trump-appointed judge. Even Trump's Attorney General admitted that the U.S. Department of Justice had not found widespread fraud that would have affected the outcome.

Yet still many of my Republican colleagues are asking us to ignore all of that. With no evidence of their own, they are asking us to ignore court rulings, ignore Republican-elected officials, and even worse, ignore the will of the people across this vast, great Nation by trying to overturn this election. They are placing more trust in Reddit conspiracy theories than the Constitution, proving that appeasing Trump is more important to them than protecting the most basic tenet of our Republic—the adherence to free and fair elections.

If there is one thing I know, it is that my troops didn't sign up to defend our democracy in war zones thousands of mile away only to watch it crumble in these hallowed halls here at home. Yet that is what this effort amounts to—an attempt to subvert our democracy. In the process, it is threatening what makes America American, because in this country—in this country—the power of the people has always

mattered more than the people in power.

That is the ideal that this Nation was founded upon. That is why a few patriots threw some tea in Boston Harbor, why Washington crossed the Delaware, why suffragists were arrested a century ago, and why my friend John Lewis crossed that bridge in Selma in 1965. It is why millions spent a Tuesday in November standing in line, braving a pandemic to make their voices heard.

Listen, this administration has always had an adversarial relationship with the truth. Trump always cries conspiracy, always foments chaos whenever something doesn't go his way. But today, we here in this Chamber have the opportunity to prove that here in this country, truth matters, that right matters, that the will of the people matters more than the whims of any single powerful individual.

I have no tea to throw in Boston Harbor tonight, and I regret that I have no rucksack to pack for my country, no Black Hawk to pilot, nor am I asking for any grand gesture from my Republican colleagues. All I am asking of you is to reflect on the oaths that you have sworn, on the damage done to our Union today, and on the sacrifices made by those who have given so much to this Nation, from the servicemembers at Arizona's Fort Huachuca and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma to the marchers who bent America's moral arc a little bit more toward justice with every single step that they took, every bridge that they crossed.

Then ask yourself whether the democracy they were willing to bleed for, the country that each of us in this Chamber has sworn to defend, is worth damaging in order to protect the porcelain ego of a man who treats the Constitution as if it were little more than a yellowing piece of paper.

I think we all know the right answer.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Kentucky, Senator PAUL.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. I wrote a speech for today. I was planning to say that I fear the chaos of establishing a precedent that Congress can overturn elections. Boy, was I right. Chaos, anarchy—the violence today was wrong and un-American.

The vote we are about to cast is incredibly important. Now more than ever, the question is, Should Congress override the certified results from the States and nullify the States' rights to conduct elections?

The vote today is not a protest; the vote today is literally to overturn elections. We have been told that this is a protest, that this is about an electoral commission. No, it is not. It is about whether to seat the electors certified by a State. It is not about an electoral commission. It is not about a protest. You can go outside if you want to pro-

test. This is about overturning a State-certified election.

If you vote to overturn these elections, wouldn't it be the opposite of States' rights Republicans have always advocated for?

This would doom the electoral college forever. It was never intended by our Founders that Congress have the power to overturn State-certified elections. My oath to the Constitution doesn't allow me to disobey the law. I can't vote to overturn the verdict of States. Such a vote would be to overturn everything held dear by those of us who support the rights of States in this great system of federalism that was bequeathed to us by our Founders.

The electoral college was created to devolve the power of selecting Presidential electors to the States. The electoral college is, without question, an inseparable friend to those who believe that every American across our vast country deserves to be heard.

If Congress were given the power to overturn the States' elections, what terrible chaos would ensue every 4 years. Imagine the furor against the electoral college if Congress becomes a forum to overturn States' electoral college slates.

It is one thing to be angry. It is another to focus one's anger in constructive ways. That hasn't happened today, to say the least.

We simply cannot destroy the Constitution, our laws, and the electoral college in the process.

I hope, as the Nation's anger cools, we can channel that energy into essential electoral reforms at the State level. America is admired around the world for our free elections. We must—we absolutely must fix this mess and restore confidence and integrity to our elections. We must.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from Virginia, Senator WARNER.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I think like most of us, I am still pretty reeling from what happened today. What I was going to talk about was the work I am most proud of since I have been here, with my good friend RICHARD BURR and all the members of the Intelligence Committee, about a multiyear report we did into foreign interference in our elections. Probably our top recommendation of that five-volume, bipartisan report was that any official or candidate should use restraint and caution when questioning results of our elections because when you do so, you often carry out the goals of our foreign adversaries. Use caution because, whether knowingly or unknowingly and whether that adversary is in Russia or China or Iran, their goals are pretty simple: They want to make it appear to Americans, to folks around the world, and to their own people that there is nothing special about American democracy.

I was going to try in a feeble way, maybe, to reach some of the rhetorical heights of BEN SASSE. I knew I couldn't do that, so instead—I know I am violating rules. Today is the day for violating rules. This is a photo that appears today in one of the most prominent German newspapers. You don't need to draw it up. You can draw up photos from any newspaper or any television feed anywhere across the world.

And what is this photo of? It is of thugs—thugs—in the Halls of this Capitol, diminishing everything we say we believe in, in this democracy.

When you look at those images, realize that those images are priceless for our adversaries. I am willing, tonight, in an overwhelming way, to take a small step, in a bipartisan way, to start restoring that trust of our people and, hopefully, the billions of people around the world who believe in that notion of American democracy. Remember, these images are still there.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Missouri, Mr. HAWLEY.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I want to begin this evening by saying thank you to the men and women of the Capitol Police, the National Guardsmen, the Metropolitan Police, and others who came to this Capitol and put their lives on the line to protect everybody here who was working inside. I want to thank law enforcement all across this country—in my home State of Missouri and everywhere else—who do that day in and day out.

I just want to acknowledge that, when it comes to violence, it was a terrible year in America this last year. We have seen a lot of violence against law enforcement, and today, we saw it here in the Capitol of the United States. In this country, in the United States of America, we cannot say emphatically enough: Violence is not how you achieve change. Violence is not how you achieve something better.

Our Constitution was built and put into place so that there would be, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, no appeal from ballots to bullets, which is what we saw, unfortunately, attempted tonight. There is no place for that in the United States of America, and that is why I submit to my colleagues that what we are doing here tonight is, actually, very important because, for those who have concerns about the integrity of our elections and for those who have concerns about what happened in November, this is the appropriate means. This is the lawful place where those objections and concerns should be heard. This is the forum that the law provides for—that our laws provide for—for those concerns to be registered, not through violence—not by appealing from ballots to bullets—but here, in this lawful process.

So to those who say that this is just a formality today—an antique ceremony that we have engaged in for a couple of hundred years—I can't say that I agree. I can't say that our precedent suggests that. I actually think it is very vital, what we do. The opportunity to be heard and to register objections is very vital because this is the place where those objections are to be heard and dealt with, debated, and finally resolved—in this lawful means, peacefully, without violence, without attacks, without bullets.

Let me just say now, briefly—in lieu of speaking about it later—a word about Pennsylvania, which is a State that I have been focused on and have objected to, as an example of why people are concerned—why millions of Americans are concerned—about our election integrity.

I say to Pennsylvania, quite apart from allegations of any fraud, you have a State constitution that has been interpreted for over a century to say that there is no mail-in balloting permitted except for in very narrow circumstances, which is also provided for in the law. Yet, last year, Pennsylvania's elected officials passed a whole new law that allowed for universal mail-in balloting, and they did it, regardless of what the Pennsylvania Constitution said.

Then, when Pennsylvania's citizens tried to be heard on this subject before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, they were dismissed on grounds of procedure and timeliness, in violation of that supreme court's own precedent.

So the merits of the case have never been heard. The constitutionality of the statute, actually, has never been defended. I am not aware of any court that has passed on its constitutionality. I actually am not aware of anybody who has defended the constitutionality, and this was the statute that governed this last election in which there were over 2.5 million mail-in ballots in Pennsylvania.

This is my point, that this is the forum. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court hasn't heard the case, and there is no other court to go to, to hear the case in the State, so this is the appropriate place for these concerns to be raised, which is why I have raised them here today.

I hope that this body will not miss the opportunity to take affirmative action to address the concerns of so many millions of Americans—to say to millions of Americans tonight that violence is never warranted, that violence will not be tolerated, that those who engage in it will be prosecuted, but that this body will act to address the concerns of all Americans across the country.

We do need an investigation into irregularities, fraud. We do need a way forward together. We need election security reforms. I bet my friends on the other side of the aisle don't disagree with that. We need to find a way to move forward on that together so that

the American people from both parties and all walks of life can have confidence in their elections and so that we can arrange ourselves under the rule of law that we share together.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from Pennsylvania, Mr. CASEY.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise tonight to defend the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania—to defend the more than 6.9 million voters who voted in this election—and to condemn, in the strongest possible terms, this attempt to disenfranchise the voters of Pennsylvania based upon a lie, a falsehood. That same lie sowed the seeds of today's violence and today's lawlessness here in the Capitol.

One of my constituents, Susan, from Lehigh Valley—the community of our State where Senator TOOMEY lives—recently wrote to my office and, perhaps, said it best:

We cannot allow ANYBODY to overturn the legal votes of the citizens of Pennsylvania. This would be the ultimate destruction of our democracy.

Susan had it right. We cannot allow “ANYBODY”—and she put that word in all caps—to overturn the legal votes of the people of our State.

Let me address the allegation regarding the Pennsylvania Constitution and the general assembly and somehow that the general assembly didn't have the authority to enact “no excuse mail-in voting”—that process—for the people of our State.

First, the law in question, Act 77, was passed in 2019 and was implemented without any serious question as to its constitutionality. The law was passed by a Republican-controlled general assembly, house and senate. It was only after the 2020 election, when it became clear that President-Elect Joe Biden won Pennsylvania by a little more than 80,000 votes, that some Republican politicians in our State decided to challenge the constitutionality of the law.

Second, Act 77 is plainly constitutional. My colleagues allege that the State constitution requires in-person voting except under limited circumstances. This is not true. While Pennsylvania lays out specific situations in which absentee voting is required, there is no in-person requirement in our State constitution. The constitution sets a floor, not a ceiling, for this type of voting.

Third, apart from the argument made by my colleague, there is bipartisan agreement across our State—at the local, State, and Federal levels—that our election was fair, secure, and lawful. On Monday, my colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY, wrote in an op-ed: “The evidence is overwhelming that Joe Biden won this election.”

There is simply no evidence to justify the outrageous claims of widespread

voter fraud or election irregularities that have been suggested by those seeking to overturn the election. There have been 60 cases in court after court, all throughout our State and throughout the country, including in the Supreme Court, that have dealt with this bizarre argument that we know is based upon that lie.

In one court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, Judge Bibas, appointed by President Trump, wrote:

The campaign's claims have no merit. The United States has free and fair elections, which are the lifeblood of our democracy. Charges require specific allegations and then proof. We have neither here.

So said Judge Bibas.

Finally, a word about those election officials who did such work. These election officials all across our State—Republicans and Democrats from red counties and blue counties—did their jobs. They are patriots, and these objections are an attack on these Pennsylvania public servants. I will give you one example from Republican Commissioner Al Schmidt, of Philadelphia.

He wrote:

There really should not be a disagreement, regardless of party affiliation, when we're talking about counting votes . . . by eligible voters. It is not a very controversial thing or, at least, it shouldn't be.

After election day, Commissioner Al Schmidt, his family, and his colleagues were subjected to death threats simply because he was trying to do his job with integrity. It calls to mind that great line from “America the Beautiful”: “O beautiful for patriot dream, That sees beyond the years.”

These election officials, like so many of our patriots—and we heard from Senator DUCKWORTH tonight, a real patriot—did their jobs. Let's support these patriots. Vote against this objection.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Utah, Mr. ROMNEY.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. ROMNEY. Today was heart-breaking, and I was shaken to the core as I thought about the people I have met in China and Russia and Afghanistan and Iraq and other places who yearn for freedom and who look to this building and these shores as a place of hope. I saw the images being broadcast around the world, and it breaks my heart.

I have 25 grandchildren. Many of them were watching TV, thinking about this building, and whether their grandpa was OK. I knew I was OK. I must tell you, as well, that I am proud to serve with these men and women. This is an extraordinary group of people. I am proud to be a Member of the U.S. Senate and meet with people of integrity as we do here today.

Now, we gather due to a selfish man's injured pride and the outrage of his

supporters, whom he has deliberately misinformed for the past 2 months and stirred to action this very morning. What happened here today was an insurrection that was incited by the President of the United States. Those who choose to continue to support his dangerous gambit by objecting to the results of a legitimate and democratic election will forever be seen as being complicit in an unprecedented attack against our democracy. Fairly or not, they will be remembered for their role in this shameful episode of American history. That will be their legacy.

I salute Senators LANKFORD and LOEFFLER and BRAUN and DAINES and, I am sure, others who, in light of today's outrage, have withdrawn their objections. For any who remain insistent on an audit in order to satisfy the many people who believe the election was stolen, I would offer this perspective: No congressional audit is ever going to convince these voters, particularly when the President will continue to say that the election was stolen. The best way we can show respect for the voters who are upset is by telling them the truth.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

That is the burden. That is the duty of leadership. The truth is that President-Elect Biden won the election, and President Trump lost. I had that experience myself. It is no fun.

(Laughter.)

Scores of courts, the President's own Attorney General, and State elections officials, both Republican and Democrat, have reached that unequivocal decision.

In light of today's sad circumstances, I ask my colleague: Do we weigh our own political fortunes more heavily than we weigh the strength of our Republic, the strength of our democracy, and the cause of freedom? What is the weight of personal acclaim compared to the weight of conscience?

Leader MCCONNELL said that the vote today is the most important in his 36 years of public service. Think of that after his authorizing two wars and voting against two impeachments. He said that not because the vote reveals something about the election but because this vote reveals something about us.

I urge my colleagues to move forward with completing the electoral count, to refrain from further objections, and to unanimously affirm the legitimacy of the Presidential election.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from New Hampshire, Senator SHAHEEN.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, on January 3, I, along with 31 of my colleagues, stood in this Chamber and swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. It is both ironic and deeply disappointing that only 3 days after swearing these oaths, some of my col-

leagues are coming close to breaking this promise.

Since 1797, each U.S. President has peacefully handed over power to the next, and that will happen again on January 20, when Donald Trump, despite the protesters today, the violence today—when Donald Trump leaves the White House at noon and Joe Biden becomes President.

We have heard tonight from both Democrats and Republicans about the importance of the voters speaking in the election and about the fact that there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud. But this is not just an issue for us here in the United States; this is an issue for nascent democracies around the world, which, as Senator ROMNEY said, look to the United States as an example. We are the shining city on the hill. We give those struggling under oppression hope for a better future.

Now, like so many of us in this Chamber, I have traveled to developing democracies around the world—to Afghanistan and Iraq, to the Western Balkans, to Africa, to the country of Georgia. I went there with my colleague Senator RISCH.

In 2012, we went to Georgia to observe officially, on behalf of the Senate, the election between outgoing President Mikheil Saakashvili and his United National Movement Party and the challenge by Georgian Dream, which was a newly formed party supported and funded by billionaire oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili. It was a battle for Parliament, but also for control of the government.

Senator RISCH and I visited multiple polling places on election day, and we agreed with the international assessment that that election was free and fair and that Georgian Dream were the winners.

But there was real concern in the country that Saakashvili was going to refuse to give up power—that that would lead to violence, and it would end the nascent democratic reforms that were happening in that former Soviet Republic.

So Senator RISCH and I, the day after the election, went to visit President Saakashvili to try and talk him out of staying in power. I remember very clearly going to his home, and we sat down with him, and we pointed out that the hallmark of a democracy—what he had worked so hard for in his 8 years as President of Georgia—the hallmark of that was to turn over power in a peaceful election to the person the voters chose. Well, President Saakashvili listened to us, and he did leave office peacefully.

But it is important that future generations recognize that America—like democracies everywhere—depends on a peaceful transition of power, on believing in what the voters say, and ensuring that happens.

Unfortunately, we have heard from some Senators today who have been enabling President Trump's willful dis-

regard of the votes of our citizenry, even as they speak out against foreign leaders who ignore their own people.

They will fail, and history will remember them.

I hope that future generations will view the actions of some of those folks today as little more than an unfortunate anomaly.

Future opportunists may use this ill-fated effort to seek short-term political gain over the long-term stability of our Republic. But for the sake of our great country and America's standing in the world, I ask my colleagues today to fully endorse the results of the free and fair election and set aside this partisan attempt to subvert the will of the people. We should be venerating the peaceful transition of power, even if our own preferred candidate didn't win. That is, after all, who we are in the United States of America.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Ohio, Senator PORTMAN.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Vice President, you have fulfilled your duties as President of the Senate tonight with distinction, and we all appreciate it.

I thought about changing my mind and not speaking tonight, given the lateness of the hour, and I know all of my colleagues would have appreciated that greatly. But I thought it was necessary to speak because I want the American people, particularly my constituents in Ohio, to see that we will not be intimidated, that we will not be disrupted from our work, that here in the citadel of democracy, we will continue to do the work of the people. Mob rule is not going to prevail here.

Now, let's face it. We did not reclaim this Chamber tonight. Brave and selfless law enforcement officers stood in the breach and ensured that the citadel of democracy would be protected and that we would be defended, and we are deeply grateful for that—as is the Nation.

I have listened carefully to comments of my colleagues, and I have listened over the past couple of weeks as this issue has been discussed, and I tell you, for me, it is not a hard decision. I stand with the Constitution. I stand with what the Constitution makes clear: The people and the States hold the power here, not us.

My oath to the Constitution and my reverence for our democratic principles make it easy for me to confirm these State certifications.

By the way, I opposed this process some 15 years ago, when some Democrats chose to object to the electors from my home State of Ohio after the 2004 elections. I opposed it then, and I oppose it now. I said at the time that Congress must not thwart the will of the people. That is what we would be doing.

Let's assume for a moment that those who object to the certifications are right, that the Constitution intended that a bare majority of Members of Congress could circumvent the States that have chosen to certify the popular votes of their own State citizens. I ask the objectors to think about the precedent that would be set if we were to do that.

What if the majority in the House and the Senate were of the other party when a Presidential candidate of our party came through a close Presidential election? Would you want a Congress controlled by the Democrats to play the role you now intend for us?

It is asking Congress to substitute its judgment for the judgment of the voters and its judgment for the judgment of the States that certified the results. And even forgetting the dangerous precedent that would be set, what would be the basis for objecting in this election?

Look, I voted for President Trump. I supported him because I believe the Trump administration's policies are better for Ohio and for the country. And I supported the Trump campaign's right to pursue recounts—they had every right to do it—and legal challenges.

I agree that there were instances of fraud and irregularities in the 2020 elections. I think we all do. And by the way, there are fraud and irregularities in every Presidential election.

But it is also true that after 2 months of recounts and legal challenges, not a single State recount changed the result. And of the dozens of lawsuits filed, not one found evidence of fraud or irregularities widespread enough to change the result of the election. This was the finding of numerous Republican-appointed judges and the Trump administration's own Department of Justice.

Every State has now weighed in and chosen to certify its electoral slate based on the popular vote, as set out in the Constitution.

I understand that many Americans who would never storm this Capitol don't trust the integrity of the 2020 election, don't think the States should have certified, don't think we should have accepted the results from the States, and are insisting on more transparency and accountability.

In the 2016 elections, lest we forget, many Democrats objected to the results and distrusted the election.

I challenge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to listen but also to do our part to try to restore faith in our elections. We should all work to improve the integrity of the electoral system and the confidence of the American people in this bedrock of our great democratic Republic.

Today, I will do my constitutional duty and oppose these efforts to reject the State-certified results.

And tomorrow, in the wake of this attack on the Capitol, the pandemic that engulfs us, and other national

challenges, let's work together for the people.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I believe we have 8 minutes left, so I would like to divide 4 to Senator KING and 4 to Senator VAN HOLLEN.

The VICE PRESIDENT. That is correct.

The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, Winston Churchill once said that he could do a 2-hour speech extemporaneously, but a 10-minute speech took immense preparation. I don't know what he would have said about a 4-minute speech.

We are a 240-year anomaly in world history. We think that what we have here in this country is the way it has always been.

It is a very unusual form of government. The normal form of government throughout world history is dictators, kings, czars, pharaohs, warlords, tyrants. And we thought 20 years ago the march of history was toward democracy, but it is in retreat in Hungary and Turkey—goodness knows, in Russia.

Democracy as we have practiced it is fragile. It is fragile, and it rests upon trust. It rests upon trust in facts, in public officials, and, yes, in elections.

I don't sympathize or justify or in any way—in any way—support—that is putting it mildly—what happened here today, but I understand it. I understand it because I saw those people interviewed today, and they said: We are here because this election has been stolen.

And the reason they said that is that their leader has been telling them that every day for 2 months.

We cannot afford to pull bricks out from the foundation of trust that underlies our entire system. And I agree with Governor ROMNEY that the answer to this problem is to tell people the truth—is to tell them what happened.

It is easy to confront your opponents. It is hard to confront your friends.

It is hard to tell your supporters something they don't want to hear, but that is our obligation. That is why the word "leader" is applied to people in jobs like ours. It is not supposed to be easy. It is supposed to be something that we take on as a sacred obligation, and if people believe something that isn't true, it is our obligation to tell them: No, I am sorry, it isn't, just as Senator PORTMAN just said, as MIKE LEE just said: I am sorry we can't do this here. We don't want to do this here. This is a power reserved to the States, not to the Congress.

And I agree with the majority leader. I think this is one of the most important votes any of us will ever take.

On December 1, 1862, Abraham Lincoln came to this building. He came to this building in the darkest days of the Civil War. He was trying to awaken the Congress to the crisis that we were fac-

ing, and he didn't feel that they were fully and effectively engaged. He ended his speech that day with words that I think have an eerie relevance tonight. Here is what Abraham Lincoln said:

Fellow-[Americans], we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration, will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us.

And here are his final words:

The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation.

The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. President. The mob violence and attack we saw on our Capitol today should be a wake-up call to each and every one of us of what happens when we fail to come together, not as Democrats and Republicans but each of us as Americans, to stand up to a President who time and again has shown contempt for our democracy, contempt for our Constitution.

Today, here on the Capitol, we witnessed people taking down an American flag and putting up a Trump flag. That is not democracy in the United States of America.

As every Senator who has spoken has mentioned, we have for hundreds of years had a peaceful transfer of power. Nobody likes to lose, and supporters of the losing candidate are always disappointed. What is different this time?

We all know what is different this time. We have a President who, as the Senator from New Jersey said, even before a vote was cast, that if he didn't win the election, it was going to be a fraud and every day since then has perpetrated that lie.

We have a President who just today criticized the very loyal Vice President, who is presiding right now, urging him to disregard his responsibilities under the Constitution of the United States in order to reinstall Donald Trump as President; the same person who got on the phone to the secretary of state in Georgia and threatened him to change the results of the election.

Mr. President, I read something this week I never thought I would read in a newspaper in the United States of America. It was an op-ed by all the living former Secretaries of Defense, including Secretaries Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Mattis, warning—warning—the country about our tradition of peaceful transfer of power and that it would be inappropriate for the military to take sides in the United States of America. We talk to the world about how we want to promote democracy and our values, and right here at home too many are undermining those values.

Mr. President, Donald Trump could not do this alone. He could only do it if he is aided and abetted by individuals

who are willing to perpetrate those lies and those conspiracies, and that is why it is so important that we as Democrats and Republicans and Senators stand up together—stand up together and tell the truth. You know when you go into a court of law, like those 60 cases, you are testifying under penalty of perjury. That is very different than here in the House and the Senate, and in all those 60 cases, under penalty of perjury, there was no evidence of widespread fraud. So it should be easy for us all together to tell the truth.

On January 20, Joe Biden will be sworn in as the next President of the United States. He has said he wants to bring the country together. He has said he wants to bring Democrats and Republicans together to do some of the pressing business of this country, to defeat this pandemic, to get the economy going again, to face challenging issues of racial and social justice. I hope we will learn from what happened today—the mob attack on this Capitol—the price we pay when we don't stand up for the truth and for democracy.

James McHenry, Maryland's delegate to the Constitutional Convention, wrote about a famous exchange in his diaries between Elizabeth Willing Powel and Benjamin Franklin. A lady asked Dr. Franklin, "Well, Doctor, what have we got, a Republic or a monarchy?" "A republic," replied Dr. Franklin, "if you can keep it."

My colleagues, this is a test of whether we unite to keep our Republic. I hope we will pass the test together. Thank you.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President. January 6, 2021, will forever mark a historic day for our Nation. Not simply because our beloved Capitol building—the very heart of our democracy—laid under siege. Not simply because rioters stormed the Senate and House floors, assaulting Capitol Police officers and leaving a wake of destruction along the way. Not simply because the President of the United States encouraged his supporters to commit these felonies—to march to the Capitol and "to fight," in his words. No, today will also be remembered because of what happened before all of that. Today, over 100 Members of the House and a dozen Senators supported a ploy to deprive the States and the American people of their constitutional role to choose our next President—a ploy that amounts to nothing less than an assault on our Constitutional republic.

The President's obscene claim that the election was stolen from him, which he continued to spout even while his rioting supporters roamed the Halls of the Capitol today, has been disproven time and again. Every single Senator knows that Vice President Biden won the election and did so decisively. Claims that President Trump won reelection are not just fantasy; they are delusional. And citing voters' mistrust in the election results as grounds for this stunt is particularly

disingenuous given that those concerns have been fueled by the President's own baseless conspiracy theories—not by the evidence, not by the facts, and not by State election administrators, both Republicans and Democrats, who actually oversaw these elections and know what they are talking about.

President Trump and his allies have now lost more than 60 cases in courts across the country, by judges of every political stripe, including those appointed by the President. The lopsidedness of these decisions has been extraordinary. It has been nothing less than a wholesale rejection of the President's claims. But this is not surprising. The President's own Attorney General said there is no evidence of widespread fraud. His own Department of Homeland Security described it as the "most secure election in American history."

President Trump serves no one but himself. He is not a custodian or guardian of our democracy. He is a man whose every decision is driven by his shallow self-interest. I did not expect him to be gracious in defeat. I expected him to throw tantrums. I am not even surprised that his rhetoric has incited violence, as it has today. That is who President Trump is; we have all known that for some time. I am surprised and disappointed that so many Members of this body have let it get this far. After he incited rioters and criminal actions by a mob attacking America's symbol of democracy, our Capitol, what more will he do? He should just leave. He has damaged the country enough.

Our job today is simply to count the votes and to certify that Joe Biden won the election. Pretending that Congress could effectively overturn the will of the American people has, predictably, poured gasoline on an already lit fire. We must now get to work to put this fire out. I am glad that Congress is taking the first step now—that is, to stop with this nonsense and certify this election. The next step will be harder. The only way we stand a chance of coming together as a country, let alone making progress for the American people, is by working together.

I am thankful to the many Senate Republicans who have forcefully rejected this dangerous political stunt, even before the violence. Your words had meaning and sent a message to the country that our democracy will endure.

I have served in the Senate for 46 years. I can tell you that history will remember this sad day. So let us ensure that it is not just remembered for the destruction, for the President's recklessness, and for those in Congress who so casually attempted to overturn the will of the American people. Let us work together now and certify this election, so this day will also be remembered for those who stood up and rejected this dangerous political stunt for the good of the Republic and for the good of the American people.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President. Today has been a dark day that will

take a long time and a lot of work to overcome. It has been a day truly unworthy of our Nation.

I thank the U.S. Capitol Police, the U.S. Secret Service, the law enforcement officers from Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia, the National Guard, and others who have protected this institution and the U.S. Congress today.

There will be time to say more about today's events, but I rise now to speak about the unprecedented actions today to attempt to undermine a fairly and properly conducted democratic election.

Under our system of government, States bear the primary responsibility for running elections and certifying election results, and that is exactly what we have seen—all 50 States and the District of Columbia have certified the results of the 2020 Presidential election.

The results of the election are clear: Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS won.

Challenging these electoral votes now is the height of hypocrisy for a party that prides itself on States' rights.

Even worse, today's actions are based on the faulty premise that this election was somehow tainted by widespread fraud, which is flat out wrong.

Protesting these votes today is a disservice to our constitutional order and the more than 81 million Americans who voted for Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS.

We must also recognize that today's actions could echo far beyond this election. Our democratic Republic has survived as a result of certain bedrock principles, including the peaceful transfer of power and the right of the people to elect their leaders.

For Congress to challenge the legitimacy of electoral votes because President Trump is upset that he lost far exceeds our role as envisioned by our Founding Fathers.

These challenges threaten the very core of a functioning democracy—that voters and votes matter.

If a State's electoral votes can be set aside by Congress based on conspiracy theories dreamed up by the President and his followers, the value of free and fair elections is damaged.

Mr. President, those who feel they needed to protest today's results say they do so because of allegations of fraud. The problem is, those allegations all originate from President Trump himself.

The Justice Department found no evidence of widespread fraud. Attorney General Barr himself said there were no irregularities that could have affected the outcome of the election.

Likewise, our courts—including the Supreme Court—have tossed out lawsuit after lawsuit filed by President Trump and his allies, more than 60 in total.

I appreciate those Republican Senators who have stood up for democracy and against these baseless objections to the election results.

Senator ROMNEY called it an “egregious ploy.”

Senator TOOMEY said, “Allegations of fraud by a losing campaign cannot justify overturning an election.”

Senator PORTMAN said, “I cannot support allowing Congress to thwart the will of the voters.”

And Senator THUNE added, “It’s time for everybody to move on.”

He is right; the election is over. President-Elect Biden won.

Especially now, after all of the events of the day. It is truly time to get to work repairing our country.

Thank you, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, “free, fair elections are the lifeblood of our democracy. Charges of unfairness are serious, but calling an election unfair does not make it so. Charges require specific allegations and then proof. We have neither here.”

Those aren’t my words. Those are the words of a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, rejecting President Trump’s legal challenges to the Pennsylvania election—a judge who, I might add, was a longtime member of the conservative Federalist Society and was nominated to the bench by President Trump.

Mr. President, the 2020 presidential election was hard-fought, but the American people spoke clearly and decisively: 81.2 million votes for Joe Biden, 74.2 million votes for Donald Trump, 51.3 percent of the vote for Joe Biden, 46.8 percent of the vote for Donald Trump, 306 electoral college votes for Joe Biden, 232 electoral college votes for Donald Trump.

Accepting the outcome of an election can be difficult when our political party doesn’t win, but calling an election unfair does not make it so.

More than 60 Federal and State courts, involving more than 90 judges, many of whom were nominated by Republican Presidents, including President Trump, are all in agreement. No evidence of widespread fraud, wrongdoing, or other irregularities have been uncovered during the 2020 election.

Unfortunately, some of our colleagues today ask us to do the same thing Donald Trump asked of the secretary of state of Georgia: to overturn the results of the 2020 election without specific allegations and without proof. Our colleagues are asking us not to abide by the will of the people but to bend to the will of one man, Donald Trump.

In 1787, delegates from 13 States convened in Philadelphia to debate the future of our country. Our Founders disagreed on many things, but they did agree that they didn’t want a King, and they set up an intricate system of checks and balances to ensure that we would never have an all-powerful King. That system of checks and balances is being pushed to a dangerous limit here today, but it will prevail.

Here are just some of the claims Donald Trump and his legal team have

made and that our colleagues lend credence to today: that Venezuela, Cuba, and China rigged our country’s voting machines in favor of Joe Biden; that dead people voted in this election and they only voted for Joe Biden; and that poll watchers and election observers—who risked their lives during this pandemic to uphold the integrity of our elections—stuffed ballot boxes with Biden votes and shredded Trump votes. Not one—let me repeat—not one of these things is true. There is no evidence to back up these ridiculous claims.

Many of these absurd claims from Donald Trump and his legal team are nothing more than conspiracy theories circulating online. This misinformation and dangerous rhetoric from the President and his allies, including calls for violence, have polluted our discourse and imperiled our peaceful transition of power. And when our colleagues show indifference or outright support for these unsubstantiated claims and conspiracy theories, they lead our nation and our Constitution down a dangerous path. We all swore an oath to support and defend our Constitution—not our political party, and certainly not any individual candidate.

Colleagues, for the safety of our citizens and our Republic, we must lead by example and turn the temperature down. It was a hard-fought campaign, but the campaign is over, the votes have been counted, the count has been certified in all 50 States, and in 2 weeks, on January 20th, Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS will be sworn-in as President and Vice-President of the United States.

We have serious and urgent challenges that will require working with our new President and Vice President and with one another, including making sure hundreds of millions of Americans can be vaccinated, getting our kids back to school, and getting their parents back to work, just to name a few.

It is time to stop trying to overturn the will of the people and get back to working on their behalf.

President Lincoln observed at the end of the Gettysburg Address that ours is a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” Even in the midst of a Civil War, President Lincoln put his unwavering faith in “the people” to chart our Nation’s course. We would be wise to remember Lincoln’s words in this moment. We are not a government of Trump, by Trump, and for Trump. We are a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. And the people have spoken. Our only job today is to listen to them.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, not liking whom the voters choose to vote for in an election does not mean it is a fraudulent election. Enabling such talk and actively working to disseminate false information that cripples our government is in itself a fraud committed against the American people and our Constitution.

This past November, the American people voted in the highest numbers we have seen in our Nation’s history. More than 155 million Americans cast a ballot in what was a free and fair election.

A clear majority voted for former Vice President Joe Biden over President Donald Trump. This was not the closest election in our Nation’s history by a long shot. President-Elect Joe Biden won by more than 7 million votes. He and Vice President-Elect KAMALA HARRIS won 306 electoral votes. Donald Trump and Mike Pence received 232 electoral votes.

Given the tremendous impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our country, everyone should be overwhelmed that Americans turned out in such strong numbers for this election. People should not have to choose between casting their ballot and protecting their own health and their family’s health. The pandemic wreaked havoc in so many of our lives for much of last year, which is why our election officials in most States responded by taking special measures and precautions to protect the right to vote while safeguarding the health and well-being of voters and election judges alike.

Election security officials, Federal and those in all 50 States and the District of Columbia—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—have all certified that we held a free and fair election despite these extraordinary circumstances. The Department of Homeland Security, DHS, stated that the November 3 election was “the most secure in American history” and that “there is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was in any way compromised.”

President Trump responded how we would expect a would-be autocrat to respond, by firing the head of the DHS agency overseeing election security, pursuing baseless and groundless lawsuits, and promoting wild conspiracy theories about a rigged election. These lawsuits repeatedly have been dismissed as frivolous by both State and Federal judges appointed by both Republican and Democratic Chief Executives.

There is simply no evidence of widespread voter fraud claims in this election that can credibly affect the outcome of the election, which even former U.S. Attorney General William Barr—speaking on behalf of the Department of Justice—acknowledged. In December, the electoral college met to certify the results, and all of the States and the District of Columbia have now regularly reported their results to Congress, pursuant to the 12th Amendment to the Constitution.

In Pennsylvania, a panel of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously rejected President Trump’s lawsuit making claims that a State court had already dismissed. Stephanos Bibas—a judge whom President Trump appointed—wrote, “Free, fair elections

are the lifeblood of our democracy. Charges of unfairness are serious. But calling an election unfair does not make it so. Charges require specific allegations and then proof. We have neither here."

On Monday, January 4, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, James Boasberg—whom George W. Bush originally appointed to the bench—dismissed yet another frivolous lawsuit seeking to stop Congress from certifying President President-Elect Joe Biden's victory when it meets in joint session to tally the electoral college votes on Wednesday.

In a 7-page opinion, Judge Boasberg noted that the plaintiffs had filed in the wrong court; did not have standing to sue; and had made no effort to serve defendants with the suit, a legal requirement. He indicated that he was contemplating referring the case to the Court's Committee on Grievances "for potential discipline of Plaintiffs' counsel." More importantly, he wrote, "the suit rests on a fundamental and obvious misreading of the Constitution." He concluded, "It would be risible were its target not so grave: the undermining of a democratic election for President of the United States."

After being shut down again and again by the courts and State election officials—the people who run the elections—President Trump has continued his sordid campaign to undermine the rule of law in our Nation. He continues to fan the flames of division in our Nation, including encouraging fringe elements seeking to declare martial law or have the military intervene to overturn the election results. This demagoguery led all 10 former Secretaries of Defense who are still living—Republicans and Democrats alike—to warn against any attempt to involve the military in pursuing claims of election fraud, arguing that it would take the United States into "dangerous, unlawful and unconstitutional territory."

President Trump and his enablers' ceaseless provocations call into question whether we can have a peaceful and orderly transition of power in the United States. This concern is not theoretical, as we saw today, as a lawless mob encouraged by the President temporarily took control of our sacred Capitol.

President Trump's recent phone call to pressure the Georgia secretary of state to "find" the votes he needs to win the State is his latest failure to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

Historically, American Presidents have understood that America is a democracy and not an autocracy or a cult of personality. I find it unfathomable that we even need to say that out loud.

Elected legislators cannot, in good conscience, allow President Trump to continue to act like a dictator by trying to undermine valid election results and trash and burn our Republic on his way out of office.

If a foreign leader acted in such a blatant way to overturn legitimate

election results, the full U.S. Congress would forcefully condemn such autocratic and undemocratic moves.

My congressional colleagues who are objecting to the electoral college results without any evidence or legal basis must stop coddling President Trump's insatiable ego. They must remember their oath is to the Constitution and not the President.

Sixty years ago, John F. Kennedy warned that people who foolishly seek power by riding the back of the tiger ultimately end up inside its belly. People should heed that advice. It is time to put country before personal ambition.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, the American people should have full faith in our election system, which is why I led the passage of voter ID legislation in North Carolina and why I supported President Trump's right to call for recounts and bring challenges to the courts. I share the concerns of many Americans regarding the lack of security of widespread mail-in voting and the partisan actions of activist Democratic lawyers who succeeded in making questionable changes to the voting process while Americans were already casting their ballots. Even if it wasn't enough to change the outcome of the election, irregularities and fraud are never acceptable, and they should be investigated and prosecuted when appropriate.

The Framers of our Constitution made it clear that the power to certify elections is reserved to the States, not Congress. Refusing to certify State election results has no viable path to success, and, most importantly, it lends legitimacy to the left's stated policy objective of completely federalizing elections and eliminating the electoral college. Congress should not overstep its constitutional authority by overturning the results of States and the will of American voters, especially absent legitimate requests from States for Congress to intervene.

It is a precedent we should not set, and NANCY PELOSI and CHUCK SCHUMER should not have the power to set aside electors after the 2024 election and overrule Federal courts and the Constitution as they see fit.

I was proud to support President Trump's agenda and campaign with him, and I am deeply disappointed he was not reelected despite his success in creating jobs, cutting taxes, securing a conservative judiciary, reforming the VA, and rebuilding our military. Although I certainly wish the results were different, Congress cannot change them without inflicting irreparable damage to our constitutional Republic. I will not oppose the certification of the electoral college votes, and I will not embolden politicians in the future to appoint our Presidents instead of having the American people duly elect them.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President. In America, we have fair elections and peaceful transitions of power. In America, de-

mocracy prevails over chaos. And in America, those who commit violent acts against our government are held accountable. These are the values that I served to defend in the U.S. Navy and that I have sworn an oath to uphold in the Senate, and they have not failed us.

Our democracy was tested today—first, by a baseless objection to Arizona's electoral votes, despite the fact that Arizona's elections were fairly administered and certified by a Republican Governor, a Democratic Secretary of state, and public servants at every level of government and representing both political parties; and then again when individuals, spurred on by the President, stormed the Capitol in an unpatriotic attempt to overturn our election. They will fail. Tonight we will count Arizona's electoral votes and those of every other State.

For centuries, our democracy has thrived because after elections we have come together to find common ground and solve our challenges, and that is the work we begin tonight. My focus will continue to be on representing Arizonans by working with Republicans and Democrats and the incoming administration to beat this virus and rebuild our economy.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. President, it is the privilege of a lifetime to represent the people of Wyoming in this great deliberative body. I genuinely look forward to joining each of you to make a difference for the American people and to uphold my solemn oath to support and defend the Constitution.

Let me be clear. An attack on our Capitol is an attack on our Constitution and democracy itself. I strongly condemn the violence that occurred today, which did more to thwart the democratic process than to protect it. Today, many Members of the Senate were trying to peacefully use our democratic process to ensure each and every American's vote counts. In the best tradition of the U.S. Senate, we will fulfill our constitutional duty and complete the electoral count tonight.

In 1833, Senator Daniel Webster said that "duty binds . . . the conscience of the individual member" in counting the votes for President and Vice President. Each of us has a solemn duty to ensure that the slate of Presidential electors we certify is beyond reproach, respecting the people's voice and upholding the Constitution.

Congress will not overturn the people's voice. A president will be inaugurated on January 20. Congress cannot and shall not dictate the results of a Presidential election to our States. That would be the death of our Republic.

In the coming months, Congress must take a fresh look at troubling concerns from the election that simply don't add up. After the 2000 Presidential election, millions of voters in Florida felt disenfranchised, and now 74 million Americans deserve the assurance and the dignity that their votes

count the same as every other American. We owe our first duty to the American people, following procedures—like the Electoral Count Act—used for nearly 150 years.

It is my fervent hope that our State legislatures will consider meaningful election reform to ensure that our election laws are applied uniformly, to ensure the technology we use is accurate and secure, and, most importantly, to ensure that all Americans treasure our precious right to vote and feel their voices are heard. States are at the very center of elections in our country and will remain so.

Many ask why Congress should be involved in election matters that have been considered by the courts. Some argue that Congress' role in certifying our Presidential elections is merely ministerial. Under our constitutional separation of powers, it is too often forgotten that Congress has the right and duty to interpret the Constitution, especially on matters which by the Constitution have been delegated to Congress, like the electoral count. Congress interpreted the Twelfth Amendment in passing the Electoral Count Act in 1887 and continues to breathe new life into these provisions by its actions today. Our Founders understood Congress would play a key role in debating constitutional issues as a co-equal branch of government. Thomas Jefferson commented in an 1819 letter that "each of the three departments [of government] has equally the right to decide for itself what is its duty under the Constitution."

I remain deeply concerned that the electoral votes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania were not "regularly given" under Pennsylvania law, as required by the Electoral Count Act. Serious concerns have been raised about the constitutionality of Pennsylvania's vote-by-mail statute. Also, Pennsylvania election law may have been applied unevenly by State officials, including signature verification and voter identification requirements.

In 2005, Senator Barbara Boxer and the late Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones objected to the slate of electors from Ohio. They rightfully drew attention to the fact that many African-Americans and other communities suffered disproportionate wait times at the polls, broken voting machines, and high ballot rejection rates. Raising this objection led to some of these issues being remedied and more Americans having the precious opportunity to vote. That is a legacy our Senate and every American should value today.

Thank you.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from South Carolina, Senator GRAHAM.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Many times, my State has been the problem. I love it. That is where I want to die but no time soon.

Tim and I have a good relationship. I love TIM SCOTT. In 1876, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida sent two slates of electors—they had two Governors, by the way—and we didn't know what to do. Why did South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana do it? To hold the country hostage to end Reconstruction. It worked.

The Commission was 8 to 7. It did work. Nobody accepted it. The way it ended is when Hayes did a deal with these three States: You give me the electors. I will kick the Union Army out. The rest is history. It led to Jim Crow. If you are looking for historical guidance, this is not the one to pick.

If you are looking for a way to convince people there was no fraud, having a commission chosen by NANCY PELOSI, MITCH MCCONNELL, and John Roberts is not going to get you to where you want to go. It ain't gonna work. So it is not going to do any good. It is going to delay, and it gives credibility to a dark chapter of our history. That is why I am not with you, but I will fight to my death for you. You are able to object. You are not doing anything wrong. Other people have objected. I just think it is a uniquely bad idea to delay this election.

Trump and I have had a hell of a journey. I hate it being this way. Oh, my God, I hate it. From my point of view, he has been a consequential President. But today, the first thing you will see, all I can say is, count me out. Enough is enough. I tried to be helpful. But when the Wisconsin supreme court ruled 4 to 3 that they didn't violate the Constitution of Wisconsin, I agreed with the three, but I accept the four. If Al Gore can accept 5 to 4 he is not President, I can accept Wisconsin 4 to 3.

Pennsylvania went to the Second Circuit. So much for all the judges being in Trump's pocket. They said: No, you are wrong. I accept the Pennsylvania Second Circuit that Trump's lawsuit wasn't right.

Georgia, they said the secretary of state took the law in his own hands, and he changed the election laws unlawfully. A Federal judge said no. I accept the Federal judge, even though I don't agree with it.

Fraud. They say there is 66,000 people in Georgia under 18 voting. How many people believe that? I asked: Give me 10. I haven't had one. They said 8,000 felons in prison in Arizona voted. Give me 10. I haven't gotten one.

Does that say there are problems in every election? I don't buy this. Enough is enough. We got to end it.

Vice President PENCE, what they are asking you to do, you won't do because you can't.

Talk about interesting times. I associate myself with RAND PAUL. How many times will you hear that? The mob has done something nobody else could do to get me and Rand to agree. Rand is right. If you are a conservative, this is the most offensive concept in the world that a single person could disenfranchise 155 million people.

[T]he President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and the House of Representatives, open all certificates and the votes shall then be counted; The person having the greatest number of votes for President shall be President.

Where in there does it say that Mike can say, "I don't like the results; I want to send them back to the States; I believe there was fraud"?

To the conservatives who believe in the Constitution, now is your chance to stand up and be counted.

Originalism, count me in. It means what it says.

So Mike—Mr. Vice President, just hang in there. They said: We can count on Mike. All of us can count on the Vice President. You are going to do the right thing. You are going to do the constitutional thing. You have a son who flies F-35s. You have got a son-in-law flying F-18s. They are out there flying so we can get it right here.

There are people dying, to my good friend from Illinois, to make sure we have a chance to argue among ourselves, and when it is over, it is over. It is over.

The final thing. Joe Biden. I have traveled the world with Joe. I hoped he lost. I prayed he would lose. He won. He is the legitimate President of the United States. I cannot convince people, certain groups, by my words, but I will tell you by my actions that maybe I, above all others in this body, need to say this. Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS are lawfully elected and will become the President and the Vice President of the United States on January the 20th.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield back the balance of our time.

VOTE ON OBJECTION TO COUNTING OF ARIZONA ELECTORAL VOTES

The VICE PRESIDENT. All time has expired.

The question is, Shall the objection submitted by the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. GOSAR, and the Senator from Texas, Mr. CRUZ, and others be sustained?

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 6, nays 93, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 1 Leg.]

YEAS—6

Cruz	Hyde-Smith	Marshall
Hawley	Kennedy	Tuberville

NAYS—93

Baldwin	Brown	Coons
Barrasso	Burr	Cornyn
Bennet	Cantwell	Cortez Masto
Blackburn	Capito	Cotton
Blumenthal	Cardin	Cramer
Blunt	Carper	Crapo
Booker	Casey	Daines
Boozman	Cassidy	Duckworth
Braun	Collins	Durbin

Ernst	Loeffler	Sasse
Feinstein	Lujan	Schatz
Fischer	Lummis	Schumer
Gillibrand	Manchin	Scott (FL)
Graham	Markey	Scott (SC)
Grassley	McConnell	Shaheen
Hagerty	Menendez	Shelby
Harris	Merkley	Sinema
Hassan	Moran	Smith
Heinrich	Murkowski	Stabenow
Hickenlooper	Murphy	Sullivan
Hirono	Murray	Tester
Hoeben	Paul	Thune
Inhofe	Peters	Tillis
Johnson	Portman	Toomey
Kaine	Reed	Van Hollen
Kelly	Risch	Warner
King	Romney	Warren
Klobuchar	Rosen	Whitehouse
Lankford	Rounds	Wicker
Leahy	Rubio	Wyden
Lee	Sanders	Young

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 6, the nays are 93.

The objection is not sustained.

The Secretary will notify the House of the action of the Senate, informing that body that the Senate is now ready to proceed to joint session for further counting of the electoral vote for President and Vice President.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. So, colleagues, here is where we are. We have a few more speakers now as we wait for the House to finish their debate and vote. We expect the House to finish voting on Arizona between 11:30 and midnight.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with the following Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each: Senator TOOMEY, Senator RUBIO, and Senator COLLINS.

Mr. SCHUMER. And on our side, Senators WYDEN, HIRONO, and COONS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

OBJECTION TO COUNTING OF PENNSYLVANIA ELECTORAL VOTES

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I appreciate the indulgence of my colleagues allowing me to speak twice today. But my understanding is that later this evening, objectors will object to the certification of Pennsylvania's electoral votes because they disapprove of the process that my State used in the last election. So in light of my expectation of this objection, I rise to defend the right of my citizens, my constituents, to vote in the Presidential election.

Let's be clear. That is exactly what this objection is about. It is what it would do. It would overturn the results of the Presidential election in Pennsylvania, and it would thereby deny Pennsylvania's voters the opportunity to even participate in the Presidential election.

Even if Congress did have the constitutional responsibility to judge the

worthiness of a State's election process, which it does not, rejecting Pennsylvania's electoral votes would still be wildly out of proportion to the purported offenses and very damaging to our Republic.

Let me go through a few facts about Pennsylvania.

First, some of the objectors and, in fact, even the President of the United States this morning have observed that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court disregarded existing law when it ruled that mail-in ballots could be counted even if they arrived up to 3 days after election day.

Now, the objectors are right about that. In my view, the Supreme Court of the United States should overturn that illegal decision. But only 10,097 ballots arrived in Pennsylvania during the 3 days after the election, and those 10,097 ballots have been excluded from the vote count that resulted in President-Elect Biden winning Pennsylvania by about 80,000 votes. What greater remedy could the objectors possibly want than the complete exclusion of the late-arriving ballots? How could we possibly invalidate the entire Pennsylvania election over 10,000 votes that were not even included in the vote count?

A second charge we heard—and the Senator from Missouri alluded to it this evening—is that a 2019 Pennsylvania law that allows mail-in ballots for any reason—that that might violate the Pennsylvania Constitution. First of all, as Senator CASEY observed, this was a bipartisan law passed with nearly unanimous Republican support. Clearly, the State legislators and the Governor believe it is consistent with the Pennsylvania Constitution.

Secondly, this law was not challenged when it was passed. It wasn't challenged when it was applied during the June primary election. It was challenged only after President Trump lost the general election. But 2.6 million Pennsylvanians voted by mail-in ballot in the general election. Over 37 percent of Pennsylvania voters, in good faith, relied on a law to cast their votes, as they had done previously. Now, I understand you can make a theoretical argument about whether this is consistent with Pennsylvania's Constitution, and that needs to be resolved for future elections. But because of this constitutional question that some people have, the objectors want to prevent Pennsylvania voters from participating in the Presidential election entirely. That would be an outrageous remedy to this purported offense.

A third charge we have heard is that Pennsylvania officials did not properly implement Pennsylvania election law in a variety of other ways. But the Trump campaign has shown that many of these issues have—well, first of all, none of these issues would have changed the election outcome, but more importantly, the campaign had many opportunities, of which it availed itself, to litigate these issues. They did

time and again, and they lost repeatedly, often in unanimous, bipartisan decisions.

Some of the objectors also cite Congress's own failure to investigate allegations of election irregularities, and that is their justification for refusing to certify the election results. But the allegations of election irregularities and fraud have been investigated. They have been adjudicated. They were adjudicated in the States in which they were alleged to have occurred.

In Pennsylvania, the Trump campaign took their case of election irregularities into the courtroom of Judge Matthew Brann of the Federal district court. Judge Brann is a conservative Republican Federalist Society member. Here is what he said about the Trump campaign case:

This court has been presented with strained legal arguments without merit and speculative accusations . . . unsupported by evidence. In the United States of America, this cannot justify the disenfranchisement of a single voter, let alone all [the] voters of the sixth most populated state.

So the campaign then appealed Judge Brann's decision to the Third Circuit, and they drew a three-judge panel, all Republican-appointed judges, one appointed by President Trump. The panel concurred with Judge Brann.

Certainly there were irregularities in this election—there always are—but there is no evidence of significant fraud, conspiracies, or even significant anomalies that cast any serious doubt on who actually won the election.

You know, one of the ways you can tell is to look at the big picture in Pennsylvania. Look at what happened. In 2016, President Trump won Pennsylvania by eight-tenths of 1 percent. In 2020, he lost Pennsylvania by a little over 1 percent. Is there anything at all that is implausible or surprising about a 2-percent change in the election outcome?

Relative to 2016, in Pennsylvania the President lost a little ground in most of the rural counties he had carried. He lost a lot of ground in the big suburban counties, and he slightly narrowed his large loss in Philadelphia. There are no surprises here. This reflects a pattern that occurred all across the country.

My colleagues, as I have said, it is not our responsibility to sit in judgment of State election procedures in the first place, but if it were, there would not be nearly sufficient reason to deny my constituents their right to participate in this Presidential election.

Joe Biden won the election. That is not what I had hoped for, but that is what happened. It was an honest victory with the usual minor irregularities that occur in most elections.

We witnessed today the damage that can result when men in power and responsibility refuse to acknowledge the truth. We saw bloodshed because the demagogue chose to spread falsehoods and sow distrust of his own fellow Americans. Let's not abet such deception. Let's reject this motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, with just a few minutes to speak, I am going to get right to the point.

Gunfire in the halls here, IEDs on the Capitol grounds—I will say to my colleagues, with the domestic terrorists roaming the halls just a few hours ago, I have been stunned that this debate is actually going forward, and that is because, colleagues, this is a fake debate on electoral certifications; that is because it lends credibility to the bogus idea that the Congress can actually toss out the results of the election, and, as we saw today, it serves to fuel insurrection.

Contrary to what some of my “aye” voting colleagues believe by votes cast just a few minutes ago, this debate has never been about setting up some kind of routine election tribunal. This isn’t about election security. If the Republic majority for the last 2 years had actually been interested in election security, they would not have worked relentlessly to block my legislation to secure our 2020 elections with hand-marked paper ballots and post-election security audits.

By the way, those are the kinds of approaches that are part of the Oregon system, where for 25 years we voted by mail. I am the Nation’s first mail-in U.S. Senator. The second—and I see my colleagues from Maine and Alaska here because they are very fond of him, like I am—Gordon Smith, a Republican, was the second mail-in U.S. Senator in our country. That is because we do the job right. It is efficient.

Our late-Republican secretary of state, Dennis Richardson, actually told President Trump there was no evidence of fraud.

So if Republicans had been interested over the last 2 years in actually working with me and colleagues on both sides of the aisle and secretaries of state, we could have had an approach that would have empowered the Oregon idea to go national. Instead, we are now debating tonight the idea of—a discussion grounded in total fiction, brewed in cauldrons of conspiracies online. These, colleagues, are fever dreams—fever dreams laundered by people with election certificates and real power. And I will tell you, it has been painful to watch colleagues sidle up to some of those conspiracies that would inflict so much damage on the American experiment.

Colleagues, I am going to close with one last point. We saw today an effort by domestic terrorists to try to punch our democracy to the ground, to the ropes. I am going to close by simply saying something that hadn’t been said tonight, and that is that Donald Trump can do enormous damage to our country in the next 2 weeks. In the next 2 weeks, colleagues, Donald Trump can do enormous damage to our wonderful country.

This afternoon—I don’t know if my colleagues saw it—the National Asso-

ciation of Manufacturers—an organization with thousands of businesses, thousands of companies, and not exactly a leftwing outfit—they called for moving forward with the 25th Amendment. That was all over the news already this afternoon, colleagues. The National Association of Manufacturers. That is what we are seeing in our country with respect to the fear of Americans, having watched what happened here.

I am just going to close by way of saying that I believe that for the next 2 weeks, we have an enormous responsibility to watchdog Donald Trump day in and day out, to do everything possible to prevent the kinds of abuses that we saw today, where an American lost her life, and we saw the fear among our citizens at what went on. Let’s do everything we can as leaders, Democrats and Republicans, to make sure that in the next 2 weeks, Donald Trump’s abuses are checked and we do everything we can to protect this wonderful Nation of ours.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, over the last weeks and days leading up to this vote here today, I have heard from a lot of people about this vote, and I guess I want to address it as much to them as anybody else. These are people I know. These are friends. These are neighbors. These are longtime supporters, generally people on my side of the political aisle.

And they are upset. They are upset. They look at the media, and the media, they censored stories that might have been negative toward Joe Biden or were negative toward Joe Biden, and social media companies helped them out. And they saw how some States tinkered with and even mutilated State election laws, and they have doubts that the election was legitimate.

It gives this country this extraordinary crisis of confidence, which is very dangerous because democracy is very fragile, and it is not held together by elections. Democracy is held together by people’s confidence in the election and their willingness to abide by its results.

So the notion was we need to do something; we need to fight. Several of my colleagues have adopted the idea—and I respect it—that they are going to object.

Now, listen, it is important to understand something. Even the people objecting in the Senate recognize that it is not going to pass. It is not going to change the outcome, but it is going to send a message, and it is going to make a point.

The problem is I think it is a terrible idea at this moment. Just hours ago, a young lady died in this Capitol. That means somebody, somewhere in this country, got a phone call that their daughter was dead. Their daughter was going to a political rally; she is dead—

died in this Capitol, somewhere not far from where we are standing.

We had police officers—the men and women we walk by every single day, who guard the doors and we say hello to—out there with riot gear getting spit on and attacked today—not 10 weeks ago; just a few hours ago. I think it is important to think about all those things on a night like tonight with everything that has happened.

I wouldn’t even be here today—I doubt very much whether I would have even been interested in politics—had it not been for my grandfather. He died when I was 14, but I grew up at his knee. He would sit on the porch and would smoke three cigars a day, and he loved history.

He was born in 1899 in rural Cuba. It was still governed by the United States. It was a protectorate. Three years later, it gained its independence and became a republic.

During my grandfather’s first 60 years of life, he saw his country have an armed insurrection after a contested election, multiple Presidents go into exile, two military coups, and the rise of a Marxist dictator—a tyranny that stands to this day.

My entire life—my entire life I have lived with and next to people who came to America because their country was chaotic and their country was unsafe. What I saw today—what we have seen—looks more like those countries than the extraordinary Nation that I am privileged to call home, and I think about the mockery that it makes of our country.

A lot of people say: Oh, well, China, China. Let me just say something. In all modesty, no one here has worked harder on the issue of China. They hate my guts. I am sanctioned—I don’t know what they are sanctioning—double sanctioned, and I can’t travel there. I wasn’t planning to anyway.

China is laughing. They are loving this tonight. In Beijing they are high-fiving because they point to this and they say: This is proof the future belongs to China. America is in decline.

Vladimir Putin—there is nothing Vladimir Putin could have come up with better than what happened here. It makes us look like we are in total chaos and collapse—not to mention the Ayatollah, who is probably bragging, if he has buddies, to his buddies: Look what is happening to the Great Satan.

I think politics has made us crazy. Everybody in this country has lost their minds on politics, and we have forgotten that America is not a government, America is not a President, America is not a Congress.

Let me tell you what America is. America is your family. America is your faith. America is your community. That is America. That is what our adversaries don’t understand, and that is what we need to remember. That is how we are going to rebuild this country and turn the page and have a future even brighter than our past.

So that is why I feel so strongly about this and why I hope those who disagree with me will understand.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, it has been hard, at times, to find the words to describe the full harm that Donald Trump has inflicted on our country. We can spend hours dissecting how his policies have made us less safe and less healthy, but his Presidency has also been a profound moral failure.

Let me tell you a story. A few years ago, a father from Hawaii joined me at one of my talk-story sessions in my office, and he asked me a question that struck me hard at that time and has stuck with me until today. He said: How can I tell my son that lying is not OK when the President of the United States lies every single day? I struggled to answer his question then, and I am not sure I could offer an adequate answer now.

But this conversation remains a clear example of how we do not live in normal times. How is it normal as we and the world watched in horror as an angry mob stormed the U.S. Capitol? Blood was shed. People were hurt. Vandalism occurred.

It is not normal when we have a President who lies every single day. And even in the face of this vandalism, this mob, he really doesn't have much to say except: I love you. You should go home now.

It is not normal when, in the middle of a pandemic that has claimed the lives of over 350,000 Americans, which is nearly the combined population of the islands of Maui and the Big Island, we have a President who only seems to care about spreading conspiracies to undermine confidence in our elections and our democracy.

It is not normal when duly elected Senators who took an oath to uphold the Constitution pull a stunt to try and nullify millions of votes in six States so that Donald Trump can remain President. I call this effort a stunt because it is doomed to fail.

We have a strong bipartisan majority, as noted in the vote that we just took, in both Chambers of Congress who reject this stunt, and courts have ruled against Trump and his allies in more than 60 cases.

So whenever this farce ends, the result will be the same: Donald Trump will have lost the election, and Joe Biden will become the 46th President of the United States.

You can tell a lot about a person from the way they handle defeat. The way Donald Trump has handled defeat says a lot about who he is. Watching so many of our colleagues indulge the President tells us a lot about them too.

We don't have to look back very far in history to find examples of candidates who lost tough races but demonstrated their character in defeat. Our colleague Senator ROMNEY graciously conceded his defeat to President Obama in noting:

At a time like this, we can't risk partisan bickering and political posturing. Our lead-

ers have to reach across the aisle to do the people's work, and we citizens also have to rise to the occasion.

And in 2000, during an election with substantial irregularities and partisan intervention from the Supreme Court, Al Gore, nevertheless, put his country first and he said:

Let there be no doubt, while I strongly disagree with the Court's decision, I accept it. . . . And tonight, for the sake of our unity as a people and the strength of our democracy, I offer my concession.

As I reflect on the service of these distinguished public servants and the acts they took to maintain our democracy, I am also drawn to remarks President Obama made 4 years ago in his farewell address to the Nation when he warned that our democracy is threatened whenever we take it for granted.

It is a particularly sage warning as we contend with the President of the United States seeking to nullify a free and fair election simply because he lost. We have to stand up, speak out, and fight back because our democracy itself is at stake.

American democracy has endured over these centuries in large part because our institutions serve as guardrails to keep us from going over the cliff. As elected officials, we can strengthen these guardrails by listening to our own conscience in moments of peril, by having what our friend John Lewis called "an executive session with myself."

Before making a big decision, John would say: Listen self, this is what you must do; this is where you must go. Today, we can follow John's example, listen to our conscience, stand up for our Constitution, and do what is right.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, let me begin my remarks tonight by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the members of the law enforcement community and the National Guard whose hard work and courage made it possible for us to resume our deliberations tonight.

We return to this Chamber tonight undeterred by the violence we witnessed and strengthened in our determination to fulfill our constitutional duty. The Constitution is the foundation of our American democracy, and the Constitution is what must guide our decisions on the Presidential election.

The process the Constitution sets forth for electing Presidents through the electoral college is straightforward. The people vote. Electors are chosen. The electors vote. Then Congress counts the electors' votes.

That final step in the process is why we have convened today. Counting the votes of the electors, a function that the 12th Amendment assigns to Congress, is an administrative and largely ceremonial act. Our job is simply to count the votes certified by each

State—nothing more. We should not attempt to usurp the roles of the voters, the States, or the electoral college.

The American people have done their job, turning out in record numbers to vote in the midst of a frightening pandemic. Indeed, as a percentage of the voting-eligible population, the turnout was the highest in 120 years. Similarly, in the midst of this pandemic, hundreds of election officials and volunteers have done their job, staffing polling places and faithfully counting and often recounting votes. The States have done their job by certifying the election results.

Now, I have heard the proponents of these objections raise questions about whether the various States conducted their elections properly. When disputes over elections arise, candidates are able to appeal to our legal system, not Congress, for recourse.

In the 2 months since the 2020 election, the President's lawyers and allies have had the opportunity to make their arguments and challenge election results before the courts. Notably, every one of nearly 60 lawsuits they have brought forward have been rejected. In fact, the Supreme Court has twice refused to hear their election challenges.

We must abide by these rulings. The time has now come for Congress to do its job. We should affirm the certified results of each State by counting the votes of their electors. Altering the results of the electoral college would set a terrible precedent in which the party in control of Congress could override the will of the voters and overrule our courts to unilaterally choose the next President. One Senator attempted such a maneuver after the election in 2004, and the Senate overwhelmingly rejected that effort. The Senate has demonstrated by its vote tonight that it will follow that precedent and do so again.

Today—tonight, Mr. President, I will continue to vote to reaffirm the foundation of our democracy, the Constitution of the United States. And I will reject these challenges to the electoral college.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon is recognized.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I invite all of my colleagues to cast your eyes upon these three boxes sitting on the table in front of the dais. These three boxes contain the certified results from every State in our Union regarding how that State voted, how their electors have voted for the President of the United States of America.

You cast your eyes on these three boxes, and you know that there is something special. You see that there are straps on them holding the top on and straps around the side and they are engraved—beautiful handle, beautiful leather work, crafted in the cabinet shop of our very Senate to say to the world that their cargo is precious.

There are three of these boxes. The third box is brand new. It was crafted

because so many States were celebrating this process that they started to use very large forms, very large envelopes, very large seals to put those ballots into and, thus, a third box was needed. These boxes contain the voice of the American people weighing in, as they have election after election after election. They have been used—these two smaller boxes—for the last 14 elections. They are transported through those doors to the House of Representatives, where the Senate and House gather to witness the opening of the envelopes to determine who will be the President of the United States. It is our constitutional responsibility to witness the counting. That is what the Constitution calls for.

Tonight, when this Senate Chamber was under attack by domestic terrorists, we were held here in this room, doors locked to protect us with the help of the Capitol Police. They did an excellent job. And then they escorted us to a safe room. That announcement came quickly. And when that announcement came, our senior assistant parliamentarian, Leigh Hildebrand, organized the team to rescue these boxes and keep them safe.

Thank you to her and the entire team that rescued the voice of the American people. Had they not done so, then the hooligans outside, disrespecting the Constitution, would have come in here and opened these boxes and burned the ballots, destroying the voice of the people symbolically. I know no one in this Chamber wanted something like that to happen because we are here to defend the Constitution, to defend the integrity of the election process, not to allow it to be destroyed.

But, colleagues, although we are 100 Senators—or 99, actually, now because there are only 99 of us who are duly elected at the moment. We are 99 Senators united across party, defending these ballots from the hooligans outside.

There is more than one way these ballots can be destroyed, and that is for this Chamber and the House Chamber to vote that one of those envelopes representing the State will be shredded, will be burned, that those votes will be discounted.

We just held a vote on whether or not the envelope containing the electoral votes from Arizona should be burned. We defended these ballots against the hooligans outside, but there are those in this Chamber supporting the destruction of the voice of the citizens of Arizona—six voted. And we are coming back later tonight to vote on whether to shred or burn the ballots for the people of Pennsylvania.

We have to stand together to say absolutely not. The constitutional responsibility is for us to defend the process, not to proceed to destroy these ballots.

Now, in spite of all the troubling things that have happened in this Chamber this evening, something beau-

tiful happened, and that is, we sat here in this Chamber, all of us listening to each other, 5-minute speeches, hearing each other out, diverse views, wrestling with a complicated issue. It is really the first time that has happened in the 12 years I have served in the Senate.

We need to restore the process of struggling with America's issues together on the floor of the Senate. That is the Senate I saw when I first came here as an intern for my home State Senator in 1976. That is the Senate that I saw when I worked for Congress in the 1980s. That is the Senate that has disappeared.

There is a conversation going forward between Democrats and Republicans to restore the ability to hold debate on the floor, to restore the ability to have amendments on the floor so that we deliberate and wrestle with—in a very public and transparent fashion—the big issues.

So let's take this moment, when we are rethinking how to restore the institutions of our government, to restore and improve how this Senate operates to deal with the issues ahead of us, so that this moment is a moment where we come together rather than be divided; where, in a bipartisan fashion, we craft a strategy to restore issues to the floor—bills and amendments—and debate and decisions before the public.

Out of a dark moment can shine a bright light, a renewal, and it is a moment much needed now—a moment much needed in the executive branch as we, on the 20th of January, welcome new leadership.

And it is a moment much needed for us to restore the Senate to be the deliberative body once renowned and respected around the world. Let's defend these ballot boxes, both from the hooligans outside and those who would vote to destroy the ballots from any given State. And let us come together and restore the Senate and fight for the vision of our “we the people” Republic.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, “Free, fair elections are the lifeblood of our democracy. Charges on fairness are serious.” I think we will all agree. “But calling an election unfair does not make it so. Charges require specific allegations and then [they require] proof. We have neither here.”

Those are not my words. Those are the words of a judge on the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit rejecting President Trump's legal challenges to the Pennsylvania election. I might add, a judge who was a longtime member of the conservative Federalist Society and was nominated to the bench by none other than Donald Trump.

The 2020 Presidential election was hard-fought—we will all agree. But the American people spoke clearly, and they spoke decisively: 81.2 million voters voted for Joe Biden—81.2; 74.2 million voted for Donald Trump; 51.3 per-

cent of the vote went for Joe Biden; 46.8 percent of the vote was for Donald Trump; 306 electoral college votes for Joe Biden; 232 electoral college votes for Donald Trump. Four years earlier, Donald Trump referred to that kind of outcome as a “landslide” for him, and he lost the popular vote by 3 million votes.

But accepting the outcome of the election can be difficult when our political party doesn't win. We have all felt that before. But calling an election unfair does not make it so. More than 60 Federal and State courts involving more than 90 judges—many of whom were nominated by Republican Presidents, including Donald Trump—are all in agreement. That is pretty amazing, isn't it? All in agreement. No evidence of widespread fraud, wrongdoing, or other irregularities have been uncovered during the 2020 election. That is a victory for democracy, for our democracy.

Unfortunately, some of our colleagues today ask us to do the same thing that Donald Trump asked of the secretary of state for the State of Georgia—to overturn the results of the 2020 election without specific allegations and, more importantly, without any proof. Our colleagues are asking us not to abide by the will of the people but to bend to the will of one man—one man—Donald Trump.

In 1787, delegates from the Thirteen Colonies convened in Philadelphia to debate the future of what would become the United States of America. Our Founders disagreed on a lot of things, but, you know, they all agreed on one thing for sure: They did not want a King; they did not want a Monarch. Many of them had been there, done that. They didn't want to see it and feel it again, and they set up this intricate system of checks and balances to ensure that we would never have that all-powerful King in this country.

That system of checks and balances is being pushed to a dangerous limit here today, but that system will prevail—along with it, our democracy.

Here are just some of the claims Donald Trump and his legal team have made and that our colleagues lend credence to here today: that Venezuela, Cuba, and China rigged our country's voting machines in favor of Joe Biden; that dead people voted in this election, and they only voted for Joe Biden; that poll watchers and election observers who risked their lives during this pandemic to uphold the integrity of our elections stuffed ballot boxes with Biden votes, and then they shredded Trump votes.

Not one—let me repeat—not one of these things is true. There is no evidence—no evidence—to back up these ridiculous claims. Many of these absurd claims from Donald Trump and his legal team are nothing more than conspiracy theories circulating online.

This misinformation and dangerous rhetoric from the President and his allies—including calls for violence—have

polluted our discourse and imperiled our peaceful transfer of power.

When our colleagues show indifference to outright support for these unsubstantiated claims and conspiracy theories, they lead our Nation and our Constitution down a dangerous, dangerous path.

All of us who serve here swore an oath to support and defend our Constitution. I swore that same oath as a naval flight officer many times and as midshipman before that. But all of us here have sworn to support and defend our Constitution, not our political party and certainly not any individual candidate.

Colleagues, for the safety of our citizens and our Republic, we must lead by example. We must turn the temperature down. It was a hard-fought campaign, but the campaign is over. The votes have been counted. The count has been certified in all 50 States.

In 2 weeks, on January 20, Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS will be sworn in as President and Vice President of the United States, as they should be. We have serious and urgent challenges that will require working together with our new President and new Vice President, with one another in this Chamber—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—and with our colleagues over in the House of Representatives.

What is on our “to do” list?

We can start with making sure that hundreds of millions of Americans get vaccinated—that we get off the dime and start vaccinating. We vaccinated 4 million people last month. We were supposed to have vaccinated 20 million. How are we ever going to get to 250 million at this rate?

What else is on our “to do” list?

We are getting our kids back to school. We have kids who are unable to get on the internet, who are unable to participate in their classes, and who may not have any adult supervision at home. They are struggling, and they are falling even further behind. We need to do something to help them.

What else is on our “to do” list?—getting their parents back to work, just to name a few things. Think of all of the millions of people who have lost jobs and don’t have skills anymore to fill the jobs that are needed. They need our help. They need to be retooled and retrained. It is time to stop overturning the will of the people. Let’s get back to working on their behalf.

Abraham Lincoln has been quoted a couple of times here tonight, but he observed at the end of the Gettysburg Address that ours is a “government of the people, by the people, for the people.” Even in the midst of a civil war, President Lincoln put his unwavering faith in the people to chart our Nation’s course. We would be wise to remember Lincoln’s words at this moment, at this special moment, in our Nation’s history.

We are not a government of Trump, by Trump, and for Trump. We are a

government of the people, by the people, and for the people, and the people have spoken. The people have spoken. Our job here today is to listen to them. I intend to do that. I trust that my colleagues will join me in doing that as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, first, I want to thank all of the first responders who helped to protect this sacred Chamber today and protect those electoral college ballots.

Today is a special day. On a day when some 2,500 or more Americans will lose their lives to the coronavirus, when another 130,000 will be hospitalized with it, when hundreds of small businesses will close their doors and put thousands of Americans out of work—on this day—the U.S. Senate is not debating how to get more life-saving vaccines into Americans’ arms or how to put 2,000 badly needed dollars into their pockets. No. Instead, we are using the first days of the new Senate and Congress to give time to our radical Republican colleagues’ baseless and damaging claims of election fraud—all in an attempt to keep Donald Trump in office in violation of the U.S. Constitution. There is a word for this. It is called “sedition.” All of these unfounded objections to State electors are seditious. They are nothing short of an insurrection against the established order of the U.S. Constitution and our democratic Republic.

This is a historically shameful day for the Senate and for our country. To be clear, the notion that there is any meaningful voter fraud that has been identified in the 2020 Presidential election is a dangerous, anti-democratic, treasonous fiction. Joe Biden won. Donald Trump lost—period—but that hasn’t stopped the President and his supporters from making allegations of voter fraud in some 60 legal challenges across the country, heard by some 90 judges, including Trump judicial appointees. Not one of these challenges succeeded—not one. Despite this reality, my radical Republican colleagues claim we must have a commission to investigate the fraud.

Well, we do know one of the most undeniable instances of substantial and significant election fraud ever. We even have a recording and a transcript of it. It is of President Trump, talking like a Mafia boss to the Georgia Secretary of State—a Republican no less—pressuring and threatening him to fix the election in Trump’s favor, and holding out the prospect of criminal prosecution if he doesn’t.

“Find me 11,780 votes,” Trump said. Well, someone should find Donald Trump a real lawyer and measure him for an orange jumpsuit, because the list of statutes that this latest, shocking Presidential phone call may violate is too long to recite. The President’s words on that phone call—indeed, his conduct since his election—demand a

serious response, one much more serious than the sham before us today.

First, Federal and State law enforcement authorities should investigate Donald Trump for election fraud, extortion, conspiracy, and whatever other charges fit the bill and, if warranted, indict and try him for any crimes he has committed.

Second, we must recognize that Donald Trump is and will remain a danger to our Constitution and our democracy. So, while time is certainly limited, we should impeach Trump again and bar him from holding office in the future.

Finally, we should abolish the electoral college. It is a vestige of a racist Jim Crow America, and we have outgrown it. Every person’s vote in every State should count just the same—one person, one vote.

Election fraud and reform are very serious issues. Election reform absolutely should be debated in Congress, which is why, instead of today’s Kabuki theater, I invite my Republican colleagues to stand up and say: Yes, we need to protect and expand voting rights and election security. We need automatic voter registration. We need online voter registration. We need same-day voter registration. We should make election day a Federal holiday. We should restore voting rights to people with prior felony convictions. We should support independent redistricting commissions. Let’s spend our time debating that on the floor—debating how to reduce the influence of big money in our political system, to slow the revolving door between government officials and lobbyists, to stop gerrymandering and voter suppression. That is the real election reform that we should be debating and supporting, not these shameful, craven, baseless objections.

More than 350,000 Americans have died from the coronavirus. That is the truth. Nearly 8 million people have fallen into poverty because of the economic crisis caused by this virus. That is the truth. Wearing a mask saves lives. Vaccines are safe and effective. That is the truth. Joe Biden won. Donald Trump lost. That is the truth.

I urge all of my Senate colleagues to vote against these objections, affirm our democracy, and recognize that Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS will rightfully be sworn in on January 20 as the President and Vice President of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today was a stomach-turning, gut-wrenching moment in our history. Truly, it was an assault on the heart of our democracy.

I want to join in thanking the first responders and the police.

I also want to thank others who have been heroes of our democracy—unsung in many instances. First, they are all of the election officials, all of the poll workers, all of the members of boards

of election who actually counted the votes—who went to the polls and made sure that votes could be cast—and who, ultimately, stood firm for the integrity of that voting system.

I want to thank the judges. There are now about 90 of them who, except for one or two who ruled the other way on a technicality, have stood firm for the integrity of that voting system. In those 60 to 70 cases, except for that one who ruled on a technicality, they went with the integrity of our voting system and the rule of law.

Today was, indeed, disgusting and sickening. It was shocking and despicable. It was heartbreaking, but it was not surprising. In fact, today's assault on our democracy—the mob violence, the riots, the thugs and goons who were inspired and incited by the President of the United States—all were of a piece, in these past 4 years, of a President who has no respect for the truth or the rule of law.

Donald Trump's Presidency is coming to a close in the very same way it began—with an attack on our democracy. In 2016, the Trump campaign welcomed hostile foreign interference with our election. The President refused to acknowledge that he would accept the results of the election if he lost. Then, again and again, he demonstrated his contempt for the rule of law and for laws themselves. He obstructed justice, and he would have been charged with it had he not been the President of the United States. He invited a foreign government to interfere in our elections and find dirt on his political opponent.

Most disturbingly, these actions by a President who demonstrated that contempt for the rule of law were met with silence from many political leaders, our colleagues here in the Senate among them—silence in the face of that contempt for the rule of law and disrespect for the law enforcers.

So we could have seen today coming. In fact, we did. I warned about it, and others did because the fantasies and falsehoods that drove those rioters—not protesters but the mob who assaulted the temple of democracy—were fueled by the President's misstatements and lies and contempt for the truth, and he was enabled. He had enablers.

Today, we are stopping, in one instance, that enabling, but we must also make sure to stop it going forward. The political stunt that brought us here today offers no great solace that it will. These stunts have consequences. We say words have consequences, and the actions today will have significant consequences. They are an attack on our democracy that undermines the core tenets of our American Government and a disrespect for the will of the people and a peaceful transition of power. The political stunts themselves, driven by opportunism, blaze a path that can be followed by more competent challenges just as the dictatorial instincts and ac-

tions of this President can be followed by more effective would-be tyrants intent on destroying our Republic.

Yes, we have more important tasks that we should be addressing as well—the pandemic, the economic revival. Yet, today, we must be mindful of the threat to our democracy that we face down and come together on a bipartisan basis, but silence is never excusable in the face of lawlessness at the very top of our political structure.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I have a question for all of my colleagues this evening, which is this: What happened here today, and how is it different from what we expected as we assembled in this Chamber early this afternoon?

Sadly, much like the impeachment trial of just a year ago, I think as many of us slogged our way to the Nation's Capitol and dutifully filed into this Chamber, we expected hours and hours of debate and discussion, knowing the outcome, knowing that what was being engaged in by a handful of our colleagues was a political stunt, feeding the ego of our President, who is chasing conspiracy theories about how he actually won the election 2 months ago that he lost and indulging his belief that somehow, somehow, the Congress could still, at the last moment, snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

Even in the last day, President Trump had been haranguing his own incredibly loyal Vice President, MIKE PENCE, as if somehow Vice President PENCE would simply declare him President today.

We knew that President Trump had been stirring up the spirits of thousands, urging them to come to Washington. We had an inkling that he might go out and speak to them, but I don't think, as we filed into this Chamber, any of us—any of us—expected that, for the second time in our Republic's history, the perimeter of this Capitol would be breached, Members of the Senate would be rushed to safety; that not just the Capitol Police but U.S. Marshals and FBI officers and fully combat-gear soldiers would be in the U.S. Capitol, taking it back from a riotous mob of thugs.

Just a few moments ago, I went to the Rotunda to see the litter and the trash, the residue and the remnants of those who took over this building today, and to say thank you to the men and women of law enforcement who helped secure it after it fell to an angry mob.

But, folks, we have to think about the consequences of what happened here today, why this happened, and what it means and what it teaches, because, frankly, tonight, now, the whole world is watching. The entire world is watching a montage of scenes—of folks cavorting in the Capitol, half-naked men taking that seat, scrawling things on different surfaces, parading up and down the Capitol corridors with a Con-

federate flag and a Trump flag, and in other ways signaling that they had done something significant. No. In fact, what they have actually done is weakened our democracy, showed some of its fragility, and encouraged our opponents around the world.

In the last 2 months since the election, we have one man who has abandoned his post, who has mostly spent his time golfing and tweeting and indulging himself in conspiracy theories and been less and less attuned to our national security and to a raging pandemic, and another man, our President-elect, who is preparing to take over the responsibility for leading this country out of this pandemic and out of its current state of deep, deep division.

President Trump has abandoned his post. He does not deserve to be President any longer, and he poses a real and present threat to the future of our democracy.

But let me also say this to my colleagues, half of whom changed their intended vote today after seeing what happened in the Capitol. There were, as we began, roughly 13 Senators—Republicans—who said they were going to vote against the certification of the election, and when we actually finally called the roll, it was just 6—7 of them having been chastened by the events of today. But two who continue on this quest clerked for the Supreme Court Chief Justice, are deeply schooled in the law, and know better than what they did today. And in the House, in the debate going on over in the House even now, more than 100 House Republicans continue with this effort.

On this floor earlier today, this evening, there were strong and clear and brave speeches by Republicans and Democrats alike.

So I have a question as we move forward. When will this fever break? When will we finally say to each other: Enough is enough of indulging and following populism and demagoguery. Is it time to finally show who the leaders are and to uphold our Constitution that every one of the House Members and a third of us swore to uphold just 3 days ago?

I will tell you, as I look ahead, that I am confident that 2 weeks from now, Joseph Biden will be sworn in as the next President, KAMALA HARRIS sworn in as the next Vice President, and we have a unique moment in my lifetime, because, as Presidents and leaders in the Senate of both parties over the last decades have observed, the Senate has steadily shrunk in its significance, its role, in its power, and the Presidency has steadily grown. Not in my lifetime—not since LBJ—have we had an incoming President who spent 36 years in this Chamber.

We have a chance with Joe Biden, a President-elect who ran on bringing our country together, a President-elect who ran on turning the page from our moment of national division, and a

President-elect who respects and honors and understands the significance of this body.

So we have to take this opportunity to heal, to hear each other, to compromise, to work together, and to see the real challenges facing the American people and take this last best moment.

What happened here today should leave all of us gravely concerned about the health and the future of our democracy, and the opportunity we will have 2 weeks from today is one we should not let pass us by.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, more than 350,000 of our loved ones have died from a terrible disease. Small businesses have gone under, never to reopen. Millions have lost their jobs, and too many families don't know how they are going to pay the rent or put groceries on the table.

It is tough out there, but Americans are fighters, and despite all the challenges, in November they did what Americans do when they are unhappy with their leadership—they voted for change. They turned their backs on a sitting President who fans the flames of hatred while bodies pile up in the morgue. Instead, they elected a new President who wants to save lives, to save our economy, and to save our democracy.

Even as the pandemic raged, Americans showed up for democracy. States worked overtime to set up safe systems, ballot drop boxes, early voting, and gallons of hand sanitizer. Voters mailed their ballots earlier, put on masks, and stood in line at the polls. The election of 2020 shattered voting records.

So here we are on the floor of the U.S. Senate in the aftermath of a historic election held in the middle of a pandemic. People are suffering, and we should be working to get them the help they need. Instead, we are here because Donald Trump wants to overturn the results of that election. The Republicans objecting to the results of this election will be judged by history, but the rest of us will be judged as well.

It is our responsibility to stand up for our democracy even while other Senators work to undermine it.

Losing is hard. I ran for President myself. It was a hard-fought primary, but Joe Biden won and I lost. I am not the only one to live through that; a number of Senators in this room have run for President. None of us was successful, and when we lost, we conceded and we got out of the race because that is how democracy works. None of us lied about the results. We didn't throw temper tantrums. We didn't tell our allies in Congress or the States to overturn the results. 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.

And it is not just us; it is everyone who has run for President since the beginning of America. Only once in America's history have the people who lost tried to burn down our democracy on the way out. They caused a civil war that nearly destroyed our Nation.

Make no mistake, the violence we witnessed in this Chamber today was the direct result of the poisonous lies that Donald Trump repeated again and again for more than 2 months. His words have consequences. Our democracy has been grievously injured by this lying coward.

This effort to subvert our democracy is not merely one last Presidential tantrum. This effort is designed to knock out the basic pillar on which democracy is founded: the idea that the voters—not the sitting President and not the Members of Congress but the voters decide who will lead this Nation.

A democracy in which the elected leaders do not bend to the will of the voters is no democracy. It is a totalitarian state. And those who pursue this effort are supporting a coup.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on this effort to overthrow our democracy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 11:25 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 12:28 a.m. when called to order by the Vice President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. I know of no further debate.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Pursuant to S. Con. Res. 1 and section 17, title III, U.S. Code, when the two Houses withdraw from the joint session to count the electoral vote for separate consideration of an objection, a Senator may speak to the objection for 5 minutes and not more than once. Debate shall not exceed 2 hours, after which the Chair will put the question: Shall the objection be sustained?

The clerk will report the objection made in the joint session.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Objection from Senator HAWLEY from Missouri and Representative PERRY from Pennsylvania, "We, a U.S. Senator and Member of the House of Representatives, object to the counting of the electoral votes of the State of Pennsylvania on the ground that they were not, under all of the known circumstances, regularly given."

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. I know of no further debate.

VOTE ON OBJECTION TO COUNTING PENNSYLVANIA ELECTORAL VOTES

The VICE PRESIDENT. If there is no further debate, the question is, Shall the objection submitted by the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. PERRY, and the Senator from Missouri, Mr. HAWLEY, be sustained?

Is there a sufficient second?

Mr. THUNE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 7, nays 92, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 2 Leg.]

YEAS—7

Cruz	Lummis	Tuberville
Hawley	Marshall	
Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)	

NAYS—92

Baldwin	Graham	Peters
Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Bennet	Hagerty	Reed
Blackburn	Harris	Risch
Blumenthal	Hassan	Romney
Blunt	Heinrich	Rosen
Booker	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Boozman	Hirono	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Sanders
Brown	Inhofe	Sasse
Burr	Johnson	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Capito	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cardin	Kennedy	Shaheen
Carper	King	Shelby
Casey	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cassidy	Lankford	Smith
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lee	Sullivan
Cornyn	Loeffler	Tester
Cortez Masto	Lujan	Thune
Cotton	Manchin	Tillis
Cramer	Markey	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Van Hollen
Daines	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Moran	Whitehouse
Ernst	Murkowski	Wicker
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Fischer	Murray	Young
Gillibrand	Paul	

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 7, the nays are 92.

The objection is not sustained.

The Secretary will notify the House of the action of the Senate, informing that body that the Senate is now ready to proceed to Joint Session for further count of the electoral vote for President and Vice President.

The majority leader.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, for information of all of our colleagues, we don't expect additional votes tonight.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Roberts, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages

from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE ISSUANCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER DECLARING ADDITIONAL STEPS TO BE TAKEN CONCERNING THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES SUPPLY CHAIN DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13873 OF MAY 15, 2019, RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE ON JANUARY 5, 2021—PM 1

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order declaring additional steps to be taken concerning the national emergency with respect to the information and communications technology and services supply chain declared in Executive Order 13873 of May 15, 2019 (Securing the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain) to deal with the threat posed by applications and other software developed or controlled by Chinese companies.

The pace and pervasiveness of the spread in the United States of certain connected mobile and desktop applications and other software developed or controlled by persons in the People's Republic of China (PRC), to include Hong Kong and Macau (China), continue to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. By accessing personal electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, Chinese connected software applications can access and capture vast swaths of information from users, including sensitive personally identifiable information and private information. The continuing activity of the PRC and the Chinese Communist Party to steal or otherwise obtain United States persons' data makes clear that there is an intent to use bulk data collection to advance China's economic and national security agenda. To deal with this threat, additional steps are required against those who develop or

control certain Chinese connected software applications to protect our national security.

The Executive Order prohibits certain future transactions, as determined by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), involving the following Chinese connected software applications: Alipay, CamScanner, QQ Wallet, SHAREit, Tencent QQ, VMate, WeChat Pay, and WPS Office. The Secretary is also directed to:

(i) continue to evaluate Chinese connected software applications that may pose an unacceptable risk to the national security, foreign policy, or economy of the United States, and to take appropriate action in accordance with Executive Order 13873; and

(ii) in consultation with the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence, provide a report to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs with recommendations to prevent the sale or transfer of United States user data to, or access of such data by, foreign adversaries, including through the establishment of regulations and policies to identify, control, and license the export of such data.

I have delegated to the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney General, the authority to take such actions, including adopting appropriate rules and regulations, and employing all other powers granted to the President by IEEPA, as may be necessary to implement the Executive Order. The heads of all executive departments and agencies are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to implement the provisions of the Executive Order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

DONALD J. TRUMP.

THE WHITE HOUSE, January 5, 2021.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE ON JANUARY 6, 2021

At 12:32 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 21. An act to enhance the innovation, security, and availability of cloud computing products and services used in the Federal Government by establishing the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program within the General Services Administration and by establishing a risk management, authorization, and continuous monitoring process to enable the Federal Government to leverage cloud computing products and services using a risk-based approach consistent with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 and cloud-based operations, and for other purposes.

H.R. 22. An act to amend the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to require the budget justifications and appropriation requests of agencies be made publicly available.

H.R. 23. An act to require congressional notification for certain changes in status of inspectors general, and for other purposes.

H.R. 26. An act to amend the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, to correct a provision on the prohibition on the use of a reverse auction, and for other purposes.

H.R. 27. An act to amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of settlement agreements, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 1. Concurrent resolution to provide for the counting on January 6, 2021, of the electoral votes for President and Vice President of the United States.

S. Con. Res. 2. Concurrent resolution extending the life of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies and authorizing the use of the rotunda and Emancipation Hall of the Capitol by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies in connection with the proceedings and ceremonies conducted for the inauguration of the President-elect and the Vice President-elect of the United States.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 1. Concurrent resolution regarding consent to assemble outside the seat of government.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to H. Res. 2, resolving that Cheryl L. Johnson of the State of Louisiana be, and is hereby, chosen Clerk of the House of Representatives; that Paul D. Irving of the State of Florida be, and is hereby, chosen Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives; that Catherine Szpindor of the Commonwealth of Virginia be, and is hereby, chosen Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives; and that Reverend Doctor Margaret Grun Kibben of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania be, and is hereby, chosen Chaplain of the House of Representatives.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to H. Res. 3, resolving that the Senate be informed that a quorum of the House of Representatives has assembled; that NANCY PELOSI, a Representative from the State of California, has been elected Speaker; and that Cheryl L. Johnson, a citizen of the State of Louisiana, has been elected Clerk of the House of Representatives of the One Hundred Seventeenth Congress.

The message also announced that a committee of two Members be appointed by the Speaker on the part of the House of Representatives to join with a committee on the part of the Senate to notify the President of the United States that a quorum of each House has assembled and Congress is ready to receive any communication that he may be pleased to make.

The message further announced that pursuant to Senate concurrent resolution 1, One Hundred Seventeenth Congress, and the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Speaker appoints as tellers on the part of the House to count the electoral votes: Ms. LOFGREN of California and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002), as amended, and the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Speaker re-appoints the following Members on the part of the House of Representatives to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission for a term expiring on December 31, 2022: Mr. Jeffrey L. Fiedler of La Quinta, California, and Mr. Michael Wessel of Falls Church, Virginia.

The message further announced that pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 2001, and the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Speaker appoints the following Members to the House Office Building Commission to serve with herself: Mr. HOYER of Maryland and Mr. MCCARTHY of California.

At 11:15 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has rejected the objection submitted by the Representative from Arizona, Mr. GOSAR, and the Senator from Texas, Mr. CRUZ, and is now ready to further proceed with the counting of the electoral votes for President and Vice President of the United States.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE ON JANUARY 7, 2021

At 3:14 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has rejected the objection submitted by the Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. PERRY, and the Senator from Missouri, Mr. HAWLEY, and is now ready to further proceed with the counting of the electoral votes for President and Vice President of the United States.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 21. An act to enhance the innovation, security, and availability of cloud computing products and services used in the Federal Government by establishing the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program within the General Services Administration and by establishing a risk management, authorization, and continuous monitoring process to enable the Federal Government to leverage cloud computing products and services using a risk-based approach consistent with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 and cloud-based operations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 22. An act to amend the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to require the budget justifications and appropriation requests of agencies be made publicly available; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 23. An act to require congressional notification for certain changes in status of inspectors general, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 26. An act to amend the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, to correct a provi-

sion on the prohibition on the use of a reverse auction, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 27. An act to amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of settlement agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 11. A bill to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 13. A bill to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on improvements to the security, integrity, and administration of Federal elections.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. COTTON, Mr. LANKFORD, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. ERNST, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 13. A bill to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on improvements to the security, integrity, and administration of Federal elections; read the first time

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 2021, THROUGH TUESDAY, JANU- ARY 19, 2021

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon the dissolution of the Joint Session, the Senate stand adjourned to then convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, January 8, at 10 a.m.; Tuesday, January 12, at 12:30 p.m.; Friday, January 15, at 10 a.m. I further ask that when the Senate adjourns on Friday January 15, it next convene at 12 noon on Tuesday, January 19; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL FRIDAY,
JANUARY 8, 2021, AT 10 A.M.

At the conclusion of the joint session of the two Houses, and in accordance with the order previously entered, at 3:48 a.m., the Senate adjourned until Friday, January 8, 2021, at 10 a.m.

WITHDRAWALS

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on January 6, 2021 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nominations:

Chad F. Wolf, of Virginia, to be Secretary of Homeland Security, vice Kirstjen Nielsen, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on January 3, 2021.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

JASON ABEND, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, VICE JON T. RYMER, RESIGNED.

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

WILLIAM PATRICK JOSEPH KIMMITT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 16, 2029, VICE F. SCOTT KIEFF, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BARBERA HALE THORNHILL, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. TERRENCE A. ADAMS
COL. CURTIS R. BASS
COL. STEVEN G. BEHMER
COL. JOSEPH L. CAMPO
COL. ANDREW M. CLARK
COL. TAD D. CLARK
COL. LUKE C. G. CROUSEY
COL. MELISSA S. CUNNINGHAM
COL. ROBERT D. DAVIS
COL. GEORGE T. M. DIETRICH III
COL. AARON D. DRAKE
COL. LYLE K. DREW
COL. STEVEN M. GORSKI
COL. GLENN T. HARRIS
COL. BRIAN S. HARTLESS
COL. JUSTIN R. HOFFMAN
COL. OTIS C. JONES
COL. BRIAN S. LAIDLAW
COL. JASON E. LINDSEY
COL. DEBRA A. LOVETTE
COL. WILLIAM L. MARSHALL
COL. ROBERT A. MASAITIS
COL. MICHAEL A. MILLER
COL. RICKY L. MILLS
COL. JEFFREY W. NELSON
COL. RANDY P. OAKLAND
COL. MAX E. PEARSON
COL. JONATHAN C. RICE IV
COL. JASON M. RUESCHHOFF
COL. JOEL W. SAFRANEK
COL. TIMOTHY A. SEJBA
COL. STEPHEN P. SNELSON
COL. BENJAMIN W. SPENCER
COL. FRANK R. VERDUGO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. ANTHONY P. ANGELLO
COL. FRANK L. BRADFIELD III
COL. HOWARD TRAVIS CLARK III
COL. ROBERT W. CLAUDE
COL. LISA M. CRAIG
COL. MITCHELL A. HANSON
COL. JENNIE R. JOHNSON
COL. ANDREW J. LEONE
COL. JOHN D. MCKAYE
COL. CRAIG MCPIKE
COL. KEVIN J. ROETHE
COL. REGINA A. SABRIC
COL. MICHAEL T. SCHULTZ

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. JOHN M. PAINTER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. BONNIE JOY BOSLER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. MICHAEL A. BATTLE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. MITCHEL NEUROCK

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. JAMES E. RAINEY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. MARIA R. GERVAIS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. RICHARD E. ANGLE
BRIG. GEN. JAMES E. BONNER
BRIG. GEN. MICHELE H. BREDEINKAMP
BRIG. GEN. RICHARD R. COFFMAN
BRIG. GEN. CHARLES D. COSTANZA
BRIG. GEN. ROBERT L. EDMONSON II
BRIG. GEN. BRIAN S. EIFLER
BRIG. GEN. JAMES J. GALLIVAN
BRIG. GEN. ANTHONY R. HALE
BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM J. HARTMAN
BRIG. GEN. DONN H. HILL
BRIG. GEN. DAVID M. HODNE
BRIG. GEN. HEIDI J. HOYLE
BRIG. GEN. SCOTT A. JACKSON
BRIG. GEN. MARK H. LANDES
BRIG. GEN. CHRISTOPHER C. LANEVE
BRIG. GEN. DAVID A. LESPERANCE
BRIG. GEN. CHARLES R. MILLER
BRIG. GEN. MICHAEL T. MORRISSEY
BRIG. GEN. ALLAN M. PEPIN
BRIG. GEN. ANTHONY W. POTTS
BRIG. GEN. WALTER T. RUGEN
BRIG. GEN. DOUGLAS F. STITT
BRIG. GEN. DARREN L. WERNER

IN THE SPACE FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. DENNIS O. BYTHEWOOD
COL. TODD R. MOORE
COL. DEVIN R. PEPPER
COL. JAMES E. SMITH

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C. SECTION 624:

To be major

TRAVIS D. BELLICCHI
PAUL S. SMITH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

JOEL R. BISCHOFF
SHELBY W. JUDD
ROBERT S. MARTIN, JR.
KENNETH D. POWERS
WAYNE T. SLETTEN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

JOHN D. CALDWELL
STEFANOS DOUMTSIS
KURT D. PIPE
KYLE J. SMET
MARION R. WENDALL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

ANDREW C. GORDON
CHELSEA M. HUTCHINSON

MEGAN G. LORD
REXFORD R. PEARCE
AARON M. ROBERTS
CASEY M. SABBAG
KARTIK SHENOY
CHRISTOPHER A. SMITH
AARON M. TAUER
CLAUDIA THOMAS
PAUL M. TRINQUERO
HANNAH E. VALDES
CASSANDRA J. WASSON
EVA K. WELCH
RICHARD G. WITTMAYER III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

ALEXANDER O. KIRKPATRICK

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

JAMILA G. EVANS
STEFAN B. FAGANKELLY
DEVAN M. THOMPSON

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY VETERINARY CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 7064:

To be lieutenant colonel

TERRA L. DAWES

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 7064:

To be major

RACHELE A. ADKINS
MOHAMED T. ALDARSANI
RUFUS C. ALLEN
ARDALAN AZAD
ROBERT J. BAUTEY
PETER C. BAULEKE
STEPHEN M. BEATY
ALEXANDER P. BOETTCHER
ADAM F. BRADLEY
ISAAC A. BROWN
MECHAN L. BROWN
EDWIN CABAN, JR.
KATHARINE M. CALDERON
WESLEIGH J. COCHRANE
ANTHONY A. CONTRADA
ANDREW W. DEEL
ALBERTO J. DELGADO
AMANDA L. DIXSON
MARISSA K. DOMINGUEZ
PETER M. ELLIS
MARC J. EMOND
BRETT D. ERLAND
STEPHEN J. ESPOSITO
ALISON E. EVANS

NABEEL GADIT
IRA A. GALLAGHER
JOHN C. GIBSON
MATTHEW G. GOBLE
CATHERINE E. GODFREY
SHALOE T. GREEN
ANDREW K. GROUND
JACLYN G. HAGNER
RICHARD W. HAGNER
KENDRA J. HARRIS
JASON A. HARRUP
ERICH M. HARTMANN
CATHY H. HARTSFIELD
BRANDON D. HERBST
ALEXANDER N. HESS
NINA S. HILNER
REBECCA S. JACKSON
BRANDON S. JONES
BRIAN D. JONES

JAMES B. KAMOROFF
KENDALL R. KEMELEK
CALLIN E. KERR
LLEWINGTINA C. KING
JONATHAN G. KRUG
JOSEPH M. LARSON
MICHAEL J. LYNESS
KEZIA B. MANESE
AARON R. MATTHES
LANDON A. MEDLEY
ESTEFANIA B. MISHKIN
OWEN D. MORRIS
MEREDITH M. PICARD
ALLYSON G. RAFFERTY
DAVID L. RETLAND
CEARL L. RIGGS
OLESEA ROAN
ROBERT W. RODRIGUEZ
JASON M. SAYRE
TRISHA M. SCHELL
LESLIE M. SCHMIDT
MATTHEW J. SCHULZ
PAUL T. SHIRK
STEVEN R. SOLLEE
JESSE S. SOMMER
AMANDA L. STAPLES
ATINA T. STAVROPOULOS
VANESSA K. STROBBE
BRITTNEY M. SULLIVAN

RYAN E. SULLIVAN
FABIENNE M. SUTER
EBONY N. THOMAS
NICOLE K. ULRICH
JOSEPH C. VANDUSEN
TUONGQUAN N. VU
RONALD C. WALTON
ANDREW S. WARMINGTON
BEAU O. WATKINS
REANNE R. WENTZ
BENJAMIN J. WETHERELL
BENJAMIN D. WILLIAMS
JOHN R. WILLIAMS
MICHAEL D. WINN
JONATHAN M. WOOD
IRIS YAO
AARON G. YEE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

CLIFTON C. KYLE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

DEWAYNE L. DEENER

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant commander

MONDRE X. BARNES

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

JAMES M. MCDONALD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant commander

BRANDON T. SALES

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

CHRISTOPHER L. HARDIN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

AARON B. STOKES

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

MICHAEL S. DEWEY
PAUL M. HERRLE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

MICHAEL J. ALLEN
MATRIX W. ELIAS
DARREN R. FLINT
CHRISTOPHER M. SMITH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

DOUGLAS A. MAYORGA
MARK L. OLDROYD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

JOSEPH W. HOCKETT

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

JAMEEL A. ALI

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

TIMOTHY M. LANDWERLEN
ADAM J. ROMNEK
KYLE H. SHOEMAKER
LONG N. VO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

JAMES A. BERRY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

JASON M. DAVIS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

STEVEN L. FERWERDA
ERIC J. GIANNETTINO
MATTHEW T. MIGLIORI
KARLTON L. PETTY
TREVOR M. SMITH
WEIGUO R. XU

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

BENJAMIN D. KASTNING
ROBERT A. LOPEZ, JR.
PAUL F. THOMAS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

DAVID W. DIXON, JR.

ROSELL HUDSON III
ELISABET PAGTAKHAN
RICHARD L. POLLARD
THOMAS R. RICE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

AARON MORA

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

MARIO J. ARELLANO
JAMES V. OBRIEN
THOMAS B. WHITE, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

KELLY E. DAYTON
MARK W. MOYER, JR.
RICHARD L. RAINES

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

ISMAEL ALICEA
MATTHEW A. BEARD
KENNETH J. MIDDENDORF
CHRISTOPHER M. NOLTING
ALFREDO TOPETE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

JAMES L. BIGGERS, JR.
RYAN B. BOLLING

TED A. BONANNO
SEAN P. BRADLEY
DAVIS R. CHRISTY
JOHN R. COLOMBERO
WILLIAM R. CREAMER
MICHAEL P. DELPALAZZO
MICHAEL A. DETTORE
BRENDAN C. FOGERTY
SCOTT C. GARDINER
GLENFORD G. GILLETT
JOSHUA E. IZENOUR
GARY R. KIPE
LAWRENCE C. LEE
KYLE A. LEWIS
NICK G. MACKRES
MICHAEL D. MCCARTHY
SARA E. MCGRATH
ELIZABETH D. PEREZ
STEPHEN M. POWELL
DAVID M. ROSS
KEVIN T. SAUNDERS
EDWARD J. SHEA
BRIAN D. STEMPIEN
PHILIP H. STEUBER
JENNY I. STORM
DEREK L. TRABAL
DAVID A. VALDEZ
SCOTT R. WALTON
MICHAEL K. WENDLER
STEPHEN G. WEST
MAISIE M. WONG
CARL M. ZIEGLER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED LIMITED DUTY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

JARED A. MASON

IN THE SPACE FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

JOSHUA D. KING