

OPINION

Impeach Trump

Then arrest him and prosecute him for inciting a riot.

By [Michael A. Cohen](#) Contributor, Updated January 6, 2021, 7:15 p.m.



President Donald Trump is seen on a screen as his supporters cheer during a rally on the National Mall on Jan. 6 where he told his supporters, "And after this, we're going to walk down there, and I'll be there with you, we're going to walk down . . . to the Capitol..."SAMUEL CORUM/GETTY

Impeach him. Do it by unanimous consent. Not tomorrow. Not the next day. Tonight.

The US House of Representatives must send the articles of impeachment to the Senate and expel him. Then disqualify him from ever holding office again.

Once that's done he can be arrested and charged with sedition and inciting a riot.

This is the only appropriate response to the horror show that has unfolded at the US Capitol today.

Pro-Trump supporters, spurred on by the president's inflammatory words at a rally earlier Wednesday, launched a terrorist attack against the US government. They have breached police lines, broken through windows, entered the Capitol, and overtaken the building. Protesters waving Confederate flags have been photographed outside the Senate, representing a new and disturbing high-water

mark of Southern treason. Rioters roamed freely in the halls of Congress, taking selfies while seated in the speaker of the House's chair and the rostrum of the US Senate. Guns were drawn on the House floor; tear gas was fired off in the rotunda of the Capitol. Multiple Capitol Police officers have been injured, at least one woman is apparently in critical condition after being shot inside the Capitol, and there are reports of [pipe bombs found near the Capitol](#) and at the RNC and DNC.

These are not protests. This is an insurrection, and it's one that the president made possible. Just hours before this insurrection began, Trump spoke to his supporters on the National Mall and [directed them](#) to head to Capitol Hill: "And after this, we're going to walk down there, and I'll be there with you, we're going to walk down . . . to the Capitol and we are going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women. And we're probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them. Because you'll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength and you have to be strong."

Later [he added](#), "We will never give up. We will never concede. It will never happen. You don't concede when there's death involved. Our country has had enough. We will not take it anymore. We will not let them silence your voices. We're not going to let it happen." His supporters took his words to heart, and only the most besotted Trump supporter would see this for something other than it is — a call to arms and a call to violence.

As the violence unfolded, President Law and Order stayed at the White House and offered tepid calls for order, apparently content to let his supporters riot in his name. Later he put out a recorded video complaining once again about a "fraudulent" election that wasn't fraudulent and calling the armed mobs who invaded the Capitol "special" people. Trump can no more criticize those who love him than he can take responsibility for his own actions.

Even before taking office, this president surrendered any moral claim to the presidency. In office, he has committed innumerable abuses of power and corrupt acts. That such a man could ever hold the nation's highest office has placed a permanent stain on the presidency and the country.

For too long we have become inured to his loathsome behavior, seemingly content in the belief, at least since Election Day, that he will be leaving the national stage soon. But 14 days is too long to wait. Trump needs to be

removed now, before he can inflict even more harm on the nation. Beyond that, a president who instigates violence against a coequal branch of government and tries to steal an election needs to be removed on general principle. There is no room for compromise or accommodation with an elected official who does that.

Moreover, all those who enabled his madness — Senators Josh Hawley and Ted Cruz, Marcia Blackburn and James Lankford; the House members who objected to the certification of Joe Biden’s victory — should be called on to resign their seats. They no longer have a place in public life.

The president-elect spoke in the midst of the violence and reminded us that we need to heal our divisions and move together as one. But that means excising from public life those who have worked so hard to divide us.

Today we must start with the clear and present national security threat at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Trump must be sent packing and it must happen now.

Michael A. Cohen’s column appears regularly in the Globe. Follow him on Twitter [@speechboy71](https://twitter.com/speechboy71).

Michael A. Cohen is a regular contributor for The Boston Globe on national politics and foreign affairs. He is also the author of “American Maelstrom: The 1968 Election and the Politics of Division.” Michael has written for dozens of news outlets, including as a columnist for the Guardian and Foreign Policy and he is the US Political Correspondent for the London Observer. He previously worked as a speechwriter at the US State Department and has been a lecturer at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs.



Mob of Trump supporters storms Capitol in attempt to overturn election, but Congress certifies Biden's victory

By [Liz Goodwin](#) and [Jazmine Ulloa](#) Globe Staff, Updated January 7, 2021, 12:46 a.m.



WASHINGTON — A mob of President Trump's supporters rushed barricades, scaled walls, brawled with police, and broke windows to storm the US Capitol on Wednesday afternoon, temporarily halting the congressional tallying of Electoral College votes that declare Joe Biden the next president.

The attack on the Capitol put a horrifying exclamation point on Trump's months-long campaign to overturn the results of the election in the face of repeated declarations by courts and state elections officials that he had lost. But the Trump-stoked insurrection was unsuccessful, as determined lawmakers returned to the Capitol Wednesday night and certified Biden's 306-232 electoral vote victory about 3:30 a.m. Thursday.

Condemnations of the violence poured in, from Trump's former defense secretary Jim Mattis to all four living former presidents, while calls even arose in some quarters to invoke the 25th Amendment to strip Trump of power in his final two weeks in office.

Before the siege on the Capitol, about 150 congressional Republicans planned to aid Trump's scheme and formally object to Biden's victory, lending oxygen to the conspiracy theories of fraud that inflamed the rioters and putting a strain on the democratic norms that dictate the nation's peaceful transition of power.

But Senators Ted Cruz of Texas and James Lankford of Oklahoma had barely delivered their speeches questioning the election results in Arizona when they were interrupted by hordes of Trump supporters. The attack came roughly an hour after Trump encouraged a crowd of thousands at a rally on the National Mall to march to the Capitol.

With the White House gleaming behind him, Trump falsely claimed the election had been stolen from him and said the group should show "strength" in order to take "back" their country. "Fight for Trump," they chanted in response.

Shortly after 2 p.m., Trump's supporters — some waving Trump flags and wearing MAGA hats, others in full tactical gear — poured into the Capitol after overwhelming the small security presence there, transforming the usually sedate environs of the building into a chaotic and dangerous free-for-all.

One woman was shot and killed by police during the attempted takeover, and a police officer was hospitalized, according to DC police. Three other people died in what the police say were unrelated medical emergencies.

"These aren't protesters, these are domestic terrorists," said Representative Jim McGovern of Massachusetts, who spoke from an undisclosed location where lawmakers had been evacuated after the attack. "These people want to stage a coup and they were doing so at the behest of the current occupant of the White House."

Vice President Mike Pence, who was presiding over the vote count, was whisked away by the Secret Service, while law enforcement officers barricaded the door to the House chamber with a piece of furniture and pointed weapons at the screaming protesters through the door's broken windows.

Capitol police told terrified lawmakers to don their gas masks and later evacuated them from the building. Senator Mitch McConnell, the Republican majority leader, was spotted shakily leaning on a companion as he was escorted out. McGovern, who was the last member to leave the House floor, looked on in horror at the glass doors in the Speakers' Lobby, which were roughly barricaded with chairs and tables, as he was evacuated. Trump's supporters were banging on the glass, still trying to get in.

One of the supporters waved a Confederate flag outside the chamber; another replaced Pence in the seat where he had been presiding over the Senate moments earlier.

The Trump supporters were not pushed off the Capitol's steps until 5 p.m., nearly three hours after they rushed the building, and video footage showed a group of them destroying journalists' TV and photo cameras after that. The city imposed a 6 p.m. curfew shortly after the protest got out of hand.

From Wilmington, Del., Biden urged Trump to call off his attack dogs. "I call on this mob to pull back and allow the work of democracy to go forward," Biden said. "It's not protest, it's insurrection."

Trump tweeted at his supporters to stay "peaceful" about half an hour after the melee began, but did not tell them to leave the premises until well after 4 p.m. "You have to go home now, we have to have peace," Trump said in a video message in which he again claimed the election had been stolen from him. "Go home, we love you, you're very special." Twitter locked Trump's account for 12 hours later Wednesday evening.

At around 5:30 p.m., lawmakers who were sheltering in place at an undisclosed location received the news that the Capitol building had been secured. After 8 p.m., Pence gavelled the Senate back into session and the lawmakers resumed the counting process. "Let us remember in the end all this mob has accomplished is to delay our work by a few hours," Democratic minority leader Chuck Schumer said.

Many lawmakers worried about the signal the debacle sent to other countries. "The entire world is watching us," said Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler of Washington. "And I am heartbroken for my country."

Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, a Democrat, called it "a fitting ending to one of the worst presidencies in the history of the United States."

The security crisis stoked by the president appeared to dampen some Republican senators' enthusiasm for claiming fraud when the vote tallying resumed. "We're headed towards, tonight, the certification of Joe Biden to be the president," said Lankford, the senator who was earlier objecting to the tally. But others, including GOP Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri, stuck to it and objected to Pennsylvania's electoral votes early Thursday morning.

“This is the lawful place where those objections and concerns should be heard,” Hawley said.

The Arizona objection was voted down decisively late Wednesday, but a majority of House Republicans supported it. A vote on the Pennsylvania objection similarly failed. Attempts by some House Republicans to object to electoral votes from Georgia, Michigan, Nevada and Wisconsin did not gain the required support of at least one senator.

Senator Mitt Romney of Utah encouraged his Republican colleagues to stop lying to their own voters. “The best way we can show respect for the voters who were upset is by telling them the truth,” he said, as Democrats applauded.

The Electoral College vote counting is usually a ceremonial process every four years that goes largely unnoticed by the press or public. But Trump falsely insisted that Pence, who presides over the count, could change the result of the election, and hand the win to him.

Before Trump’s supporters breached the barricades, McConnell chided his fellow Republicans for dragging out the process and amplifying false claims about the election in a blistering speech on the Senate floor. His remarks came the day after two Republican senators lost runoff elections in Georgia, a traditionally red state, in the aftermath of Trump’s attempt to stay in power.

“The voters, the courts, and the states have all spoken,” McConnell said. “They’ve all spoken. If we overrule them it will damage our republic forever.”

McConnell and other Republicans were silent as Trump ginned up his base with his fake grievances in the weeks after the election, making their delayed dissent too little too late when it comes to tamping down emotions in the base.

“McConnell stood on the sidelines for weeks letting Trump spin his conspiracy theories before very tepidly recognizing Biden’s victory and I think that was a disservice to the nation on this part,” said Lawrence Douglas, a professor of law at Amherst College who wrote a book about Trump’s likely refusal to concede. Dozens of Republican lawmakers joined Trump’s effort during that period, he added, amplifying the claims.

But Doug Heye, a longtime Republican strategist, pointed out that Trump’s fans primarily listen to him, anyway, with lawmakers wielding far less influence with the base. “They’re literally taking marching orders from Trump,” he said. Conservative members who did not

plan to object to the Electoral College's decision received endless angry calls from Trump fans in recent weeks, as the president continued to stoke their anger.

Representative Dean Phillips, a Democrat from Minnesota, said there was "soul searching" between Republicans and Democrats in lockdown about Trump's destructive influence on the country. "There's an acknowledgement that this has been brewing for four years and this enabling has consequences," he said of his Republican colleagues.

But even after the storming of the Capitol, some Republican lawmakers said they did not believe Trump's rhetoric was to blame for spurring the attack.

"I don't know. I wouldn't say that," Representative Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania told reporters, when asked whether the claims of fraud incited people. He then suggested journalists were to blame for anger in the country. "You guys put out what you want to put out, which is not always the full story," he said.

Some Trump fans who gathered to hear him speak earlier in the day on the National Mall parroted his claims of fraud unquestioningly, and also said they believed the Georgia Senate elections were stolen from them.

Jan Sheffield, 55, a stay-at-home mom from Georgia, rode through the night on a bus with 50 other Trump fans to be there. Decked out in Trump buttons and holding Trump flags attached to a fishing pole, she said she was in Washington "to take our country back."

When asked who she and other protesters were taking the country back from, Sheffield fought back tears as she answered. "From the wicked," she said, those who want a socialist nation and those that sold the United States to China.

"I'm from Georgia, and they stole our two Senate seats," said Sheffield. "We are here to make sure that what happened in the presidential election doesn't happen in Georgia, too."