

LETTERS

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..." I truly thought that would never happen to this free and beautiful America, but his words are coming true! Instead of saying God Bless America, we need to be on our knees and praying, God have mercy! We're going to need it!

Jeri Rector
Parkdale

Mitch think?

Amazing! Mitch think? (Your Voice, Jan. 6.)
So 1,000 invalid letters from Trump's officials who are responsible for their actions?
Are you serious? And to the Klickitat Republican Party chair, maybe you should look up the definition of sedition and treason! We have a democratic process which depends on a balance of power which your party has done everything to undermine! I was a Republican before Reagan!

Steve Carlson
White Salmon

Bentz culpable

Hours *after* Trump's domestic terrorists stormed the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6, recently elected Republican

Rep. Cliff Bentz of Oregon's Second Congressional District still voted against the certification of some of the Electoral College count and to overturn legitimate election results.
Bentz, along with dozens of other Republicans who voted with him, Donald Trump, and the terrorists are all culpable for what happened Jan. 6.
Remember that when and if Bentz runs for re-election in two years.

Tracie Hornung
Parkdale

Open letter to Bentz

What proof was it Rep. Bentz that you found that would render our citizens votes illegal or void in Pennsylvania? Almost 60 judges, including the Supreme Court, found no fraud of any consequence in our 2020 election. What was it, at the last minute, in the middle of the certification process of the Electoral College votes, that you and others found, that was missed by all those judges? What allowed you to possibly think you could throw out the Pennsylvania's' citizens votes?
I am asking for one of three things from you, Mr. Bentz ... 1) sign an open letter to all those judges and explain to them that

they were wrong, or, 2) sign an open letter to the peoples of Oregon and Pennsylvania, telling them of what proof you found, that all those courts missed, that was so large and so egregious that you had to oppose peoples votes or, 3) say you are sorry and resign.
That was just craziness!

Widge Johnson
The Dalles

25th, or impeach

When I began as a new professor in 1972, Republican Dan Evans was governor, soon to become my friend and defender. Richard Nixon, with strong bipartisan support, had pushed through the creation of the EPA in 1970. The skinhead movement was already strong in the Pacific Northwest. People of color, the Jewish faith, and members of the LGBTQ community were regularly under attack, not infrequently being killed.
By the late 1980s, skinheads had disappeared, changing to look normal, but becoming the foundation of the modern far-right terrorist groups like Patriot's Prayer. About one-third of them managed to go into law enforcement or the border patrol, where they could continue their activities without fear of the law, because they had become the law.

We need police. The world is full of criminals who would steal our money, property and lives. However, we need to acknowledge the threat that far right extremists pose to our democracy, our police departments, and our very lives.
Under Obama, the Department of Justice was investigating 25 police departments, many of which were under court orders to reform. Trump ordered every investigation canceled, every court order rescinded, and successfully set about to fan the flames of racial hatred. Is it any surprise that on Wednesday, June 6, there was very little police presence to stop the rampaging pro-Trump mob from ransacking the halls of Congress in contrast to the massive police presence at Black Lives Matter protests? Was it any surprise to see the police opening the gates for the protesters and posing for selfies with the armed protesters? Also, on Jan. 6, other members of the police in both Salem and Olympia high-fived the armed protestors there and took selfies with them.
Pence needs to immediately convene the cabinet and invoke Article 25 of the constitution. He will not do so. Impeachment takes too long to prevent the massive damage that Trump can still inflict on this country even though only a few days remain in his presidency. However,

impeachment could block a future presidential run.

Michael W. Beug,
Professor Emeritus
The Evergreen State College

Dear Gov. Brown

I feel compelled to communicate to you about the present situation in Oregon and a major decision you have recently made.
Yes, we all know you and I have our differences, but I am struggling to understand why you have decided to open schools and not businesses. I have seen businesses bend over backward to install safety barriers and other measures and comply with social distancing. Businesses need to be open and employees need to go back to work. Most people are being, and will continue to be, very cautious as long as this epidemic lasts. Let's give businesses the same opportunity you are giving schools.
I challenge you to now end the ban before people and private businesses go bankrupt.
Most sincerely,
Liz VanLeeuwen, State Representative 1981-1999
Halsey

Sen. Merkley slams 'attempted coup'

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Jan. 6, Oregon's U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley's office released the following statement after a mob, incited by President Trump, assaulted police officers and stormed the Capitol, and a group of Republican senators attempted to block the congressional certification of the Electoral College vote in the November 2020 presidential election:
"Americans have witnessed many foreign strongmen ignore elections to cling to power. I never thought

we would see this kind of attempted coup in our most hallowed temple of democracy, but that's exactly what's happened today. The American people have rejected Donald Trump's failed leadership, but he and his loyalists were trying to find any means by which to keep him in power. That is unacceptable in our republic.
"There is no evidence of any systemic fraud in any of the six states Republicans planned to challenge. All such claims were examined

not only by respective state authorities, but by the courts. But the failure of Republican leaders to stand up and speak the truth and dismiss the false claims and conspiracy theories promoted by President Trump fueled today's attempted insurrection. When a president attempts to deceive the public and inspire an anti-democratic revolt, it's the responsibility of all to stand up, set the record straight, and protect and defend our constitutional republic.

"We now have a tremendous amount to do to restore our institutions so deeply damaged over the last four years. We have pressing challenges in our nation, and we need to have everyone engaged in addressing them. The point of serving in a republic is to produce solutions and remedies to the issues people face, not to hold power for power's sake.
"I look forward to serving in the Senate while Joe Biden and Kamala Harris lead our nation. We must immediately

address the economic and health care issues raised by the pandemic. We need to invest in the foundations for families to thrive, which means health care, housing, education and good paying jobs. We need to restore our democracy and take on voter suppression, gerrymandering, and dark money, the real issues corrupting our election system. And we need to take on the biggest issue facing our planet: Climate chaos.
"We have much work to do, and we need to get to that

work right away. I hope that a few hours from now, the Senate will be able to return to the floor of the Senate to complete its debate on whether to accept the electoral votes from Arizona, and then to join with the House to complete the counting of electoral votes from across the nation. That is our responsibility under the Constitution. Let's get it done tonight, and then let's go to work on these important issues facing our democracy."

OR lawmakers appalled by U.S. Capitol violence

■ **By Gary A. Warner**

Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon's congressional delegation found themselves trapped by protestors who stormed the Capitol in protest of the Electoral College vote to verify the election of Joe Biden as President.
Pro-trump protestors broke into the main part of the Capitol, forcing senators and House members to lock themselves inside the chambers.
"Lock the doors, lock the doors," Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, shouted.
In the House, one door was barricaded as well as locked. Protestors later were able to break in, trashing the chambers as well as briefly occupying offices, before officers with tear gas drove them out.
When he was finally in a shelter-in-place position with security, Wyden said the violence that led to at least one death was the fault of the resident of the White House at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.
"What's happening today in our nation's Capitol is a direct assault on democracy, a riot by insurrectionists that

caps off four years of Donald Trump fanning the flames of fanaticism," Wyden said in a statement. "Every Republican lawmaker who supported his efforts to overturn a legitimate election shares responsibility for the violence at the heart of our democracy."
Wyden said later that President Trump had to be held responsible for the rioting. He had encouraged protestors to come to the Electoral College count, promising a "wild" time.
Trump also addressed the protestors prior to the convening of the vote in the Capitol, repeating his claims that the election he lost had been stolen by Democrats.
The United States Constitution calls for Congress to verify the Electoral College vote count in the presidential election that Biden won by more than 7 million votes in the popular vote.
The electors cast their official vote on Dec. 14 with Biden defeating Trump by 306-232 Electoral College votes.
Wednesday's usually formal and sedate joint event of Congress was expected to be different, but not violent.

Vice President Mike Pence opened the proceedings with mahogany boxes of Electoral College votes from each state.
When Arizona's 11 votes were opened, some Republicans mounted objections to votes from Arizona, the first of several states they said they would contest.
A day-long debate was expected, with no chance that the objections would succeed in attracting a majority in either chamber.
Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon, had started live-tweeting the events in Congress, writing "Stop the Coup!"
"GOP Senators just officially objected to counting the votes in a state Trump lost with one goal: keeping Trump in power despite his election loss," Merkley wrote. "This is a direct assault on our We the People Constitution."
The tweet string went silent as protestors made their way up the stairs and into the Capitol shortly after the beginning of the debates in the House and Senate.
He later held a press conference on the phone from a "secure" room he and others had been moved to at an undisclosed location.

Merkley also said Trump and his supporters pushing the objections in Congress were responsible for inciting a riot that put all the lawmakers, staff and law enforcement in danger.
"That's what we heard on the floor today — we should listen to the mob. And that's why we should stop the election of Joe Biden," Merkley said. "It should never have come to this," he said.
Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, who was sworn in as the new representative of Oregon's 2nd Congressional District just days earlier, had joined last month with fellow Republican representative-elects in a statement to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., calling for an investigation into the 2020 presidential election.
"I have joined many of my colleagues in asking for a congressional investigation and review into what has happened in states where election irregularities have been observed," the statement said.
A commission or some other investigation into the election that would delay the Electoral College vote had been put forward by Sen.

Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and other leaders of the move to object to the official count.
Bentz has repeatedly declined to give a yes or no answer to the question of whether he would join in the objections.
Bentz was not on the floor when protestors broke into the House chamber. House members rotated to the floor because of COVID-19 distancing protocols.
Bentz said the objections to the Electoral College votes were going on "according to the rules" and that those backing the effort should have let it proceed.
"There's no reason to be breaking in and putting people in fear," Bentz said.
Oregon's four other House members are Democrats who supported the Electoral College result in Biden's favor.
U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, D-Beaverton, said after being evacuated from the House side of the Capitol that she didn't think what was happening was possible in the United States.
"It's like a third-world country," Bonamici told the Oregonian in a phone call. "Someone has been shot

in the Capitol. The Capitol windows have been shot out. It's unbelievable."
Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Portland also used Twitter to link Trump's unwillingness to accept the Biden win as the genesis for the attack on the heart of constitutional democracy in the nation.
"The people storming the U.S. Capitol building right now are domestic terrorists emboldened by Trump and every Republican who has spread lies about the results of the presidential election. This has to stop."
U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Springfield, told the Oregonian the attack on Congress was a "attempt to invalidate the election."
Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Salem told the newspaper "it's pretty horrific" and said the "self-described patriots" were "terrorists."
But Schrader said Congress would get back to work as soon as it was safe and finish the vote to finalize the process leading to the Jan. 20 inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris.

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