

Trump supporters storm Capitol, members of Congress evacuated

By Lisa Mascaro and Mary Clare Jalonick
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Angry supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday in a chaotic protest aimed at thwarting a peaceful transfer of power, forcing lawmakers to be rushed from the building and interrupting challenges to Joe Biden's Electoral College victory.

Trump issued a restrained call for peace well after the melee was underway but did not urge supporters to disperse. Earlier he had egged them on to march to Capitol Hill. The Pentagon said about 1,100 District of Columbia National Guard members were being mobilized to help support law enforcement at the Capitol.

Wednesday's ordinarily mundane procedure of Congress certifying a new president was always going to be extraordinary, with Republican supporters of Trump vowing to protest results of an election that they have insisted was reversed by fraud. But even the unusual deliberations, which included the Republican vice president and Senate majority leader defying Trump's demands, were quickly overtaken.

In a raucous, out-of-control scene, protesters fought past police and breached the building, shouting and waving Trump and American flags as they marched through the halls. One person was reported shot at the Capitol, according to a person familiar with the situation. That per-

Trump urges supporters to 'go home'

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump, in a video message Wednesday afternoon, urged supporters to "go home" but kept up false attacks about the presidential election.

The video was issued more than two hours after protesters began storming the Capitol on Wednesday as lawmakers convened for an extraordinary joint session to confirm the Electoral College results and President-elect Joe Biden's victory.

Trump opened his video, saying, "I know your pain. I know your hurt. But you have to go home now."

He also went on to call the supporters "very special." He also said, "we can't play into the hands of these people. We have to have peace. So go home. We love you. You're very special."

son's condition was unknown.

The protesters abruptly interrupted the congressional proceedings in an eerie scene that featured official warnings directing people to duck under their seats for cover and put on gas masks after tear gas was used in the Capitol Rotunda.

With the crowds showing no signs of abating, Trump tweeted, "Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement. They are truly on the side of our Country. Stay peaceful!" Senators were being evacuated. Some House lawmakers tweeted they were sheltering in place in their offices.

Demonstrators fought with Capitol Police and then forced their way into the building, not long after Trump's rally near the White House.

Lawmakers had convened for an extraordinary joint session to confirm the Electoral College results.

Though fellow Republicans

were behind the challenge to Biden's 306-232 Electoral College victory, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell sought to lower tensions and argued against it. He warned the country "cannot keep drifting apart into two separate tribes" with "separate facts."

McConnell declared, "The voters, the courts and the states all have spoken."

But other Republicans, including House GOP leaders among Trump's allies were acting out the pleas of supporters at his huge Wednesday rally up Pennsylvania Avenue outside the White House to "fight for Trump."

"We have to fix this," said Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana, the GOP whip.

The last-gasp effort is all but certain to fail, defeated by bipartisan majorities in Congress prepared to accept the November results. Biden is to be inaugurated Jan. 20. Still, Trump vowed he



Julio Cortez/Associated Press

Police hold off Trump supporters who tried to break through a police barrier on Wednesday, Jan. 6, at the Capitol in Washington. As Congress prepares to affirm President-elect Joe Biden's victory, thousands of people have gathered to show their support for President Donald Trump and his claims of election fraud.

would "never concede" and urged the massive crowd to march to the Capitol where hundreds had already gathered under tight security.

"We will never give up," Trump told his noontime rally.

Vice President Mike Pence was closely watched as he stepped onto the dais to preside over the joint session in the House chamber.

Pence has a largely ceremonial role, opening the sealed envelopes from the states after they are carried in mahogany boxes used for the occasion, and reading the results aloud. But he was under growing pressure from Trump to overturn the will of the voters and tip the results in the president's favor, despite having no legal power to affect the outcome.

"Do it Mike, this is a time for extreme courage!" Trump tweeted Wednesday.

But Pence, in a statement shortly before presiding, defied Trump, saying he could not claim "unilateral authority" to reject the electoral votes that make Biden president.

Oregon's Congressional Delegation

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, D-Oregon, spoke to the Portland Tribune at 11:50 a.m. Pacific time and said she and her staff are safe and out of the building.

"I'm OK," she said. "But it's just awful. I'm concerned for the safety of everyone. The last four years, tempers have flared," Bonamici said. "Donald Trump has brought this about by urging people to come here, based on false statements."

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley spoke to reporters via conference call around 12:34 p.m., saying "We are safe. Senators were rushed to an undisclosed, safe location. We're safe and they're reestablishing control of the Capitol."

Merkley spoke with anger about the lies regarding the November election, which drove protesters to the Capitol. "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. That's exactly wrong," he said.

Nick Clemens, spokesman for Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, said that the congressman and all his staff in Washington were safe and awaiting word on next steps.

Bentz said on his Facebook page Wednesday afternoon: "Peaceful protest is essential to our society — violent protest is not. I urge all those gathered in Washington DC today to respect United States Capitol Police and allow Congress to resume deliberation in the electoral certification process."

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden: "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."

— Staff reports

EMPLOYEES

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Sheriff Travis Ash, 45, also received the vaccine with little concern about adverse effects and an eye to protecting his health and the health of those around him.

The sheriff said he was a bit sore at the site of the injection for just one day.

"I felt comfortable getting it," he said. "I've never had a reaction to any medication."

Ash said he hasn't pressed his employees to get the vaccine.

"They're all adults," he said. The Sheriff's Department employs 42 people (including Ash and McClay) in positions through these divisions: patrol, dispatch, corrections and parole and probation.

Because it is an individual decision and because of federal privacy laws regarding health care, Ash said he had no tally of how many Sheriff's Office employees have been vaccinated.

Participation by Baker City Fire Department personnel has been limited, with just four people receiving the vaccination, said Fire Chief Sean Lee.

Lee said Tuesday that he is undecided about whether to be vaccinated himself.

For one thing, the 56-year-old has asthma and he says he's concerned about how his body might react to the vaccine.

"I haven't given it a whole lot of thought," Lee said. "I'm just not in a hurry to get a shot."

Lee says he'll leave the decision about whether to get the vaccine up to each of the 15 full-time employees.

"I'm sure not going to force them to do it," he said.

The same policy is in place at the Baker City Police Department. But, as is the case at the Sheriff's Office, the agency's leader has already

received his first round of the vaccine.

Ray Duman, whose title has officially changed in the new year to interim administrator, but who still answers the phone as "Chief Duman," received his first shot on Dec. 30. He also will be returning for the second shot on Jan. 20.



Duman

Duman, 62, said Tuesday that so far six of his employees have been vaccinated and two more have signed up for the next round, which is scheduled today. That's about half of the department's 17.6 full-time workers. (That number includes a part-time evidence technician.)

"It's an individual decision people need to make for themselves," Duman said of the choice to vaccinate or not. "Hopefully people understand the outcome we're trying to achieve, but it's up to them and what's in their best interest."

Duman said his experience

began with an email from Saint Alphonsus Medical Center informing him that the vaccine was available. He then placed a call to schedule an appointment to receive his shot at the hospital.

The process took about 30 minutes, including a 15-minute wait time after receiving the vaccination to ensure that no immediate adverse reaction was experienced.

The total time also included check-in, answering screening questions and, of course, receiving the vaccine. Duman said he experienced some "minor soreness" at the injection site that lasted two or three days.

"It wasn't anything I considered out of the ordinary," he said.

Duman said his employees have the choice to gather information for themselves and then to decide whether or not to get the vaccine. Still, he believes that a higher vaccination rate is beneficial for all.

"The more people who do get the vaccine, the better

chance the whole community can open up," he said.

If Baker County, which was allowed to return to the state's high-risk designation on Jan. 1, falls back to the extreme-risk category because COVID-19 cases increase again, that will create "a whole myriad of problems," Duman said.

Under that scenario, restaurants would be required to return to curbside or curbside delivery only. And other facilities such as theaters, fitness centers and museums, would be shut down again.

"It's going to be an individual decision — whether people are conspiratorial theorists or believers in the vaccine," Duman said.

Regarding the change to his title, Duman said there will be no change to the day-to-day operation of the Baker City Police Department as a result.

Duman, a retired Oregon State Police officer, has worked as interim police chief since July 1, 2018. He said the new title was necessary

because as of Jan. 1 he is no longer a certified police officer. He said he would have had to return to the police academy to retain that certification, which he has no intention of doing.

Duman has offered to remain for another six months in the interim administrative

position. He noted, however, that the length of the extension will be determined in future conversations with his new boss Jonathan Cannon, who began work this week as Baker City's new city manager. Fred Warner Jr., who hired Duman, retired from the position last month.

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