

January 15, 2021

An Open Letter To My Fellow Republicans:

Four and a half years ago, in the runup to the 2016 national election, our 4th Congressional District proudly hosted the Washington State Republican Convention in Pasco. I was proud to address this important gathering of fellow conservatives, and in that speech, I welcomed Republicans from across our great state to kick off the convention with a reflection on our shared values and beliefs.

I reflected upon the fact that the values of small-town communities – those of our families, of our neighborhoods, of our towns and local communities – are in fact the same all-American values adopted by the Republican Party:

- We believe in supporting small businesses and policies that encourage economic development and empower our neighbors to pursue the American Dream, and we understand that it is at the local level that government can be the most efficient, effective, and responsive to the voices of local communities;
- We know that personal decision-making is best left in the hands of the individual – not government – including making our own health care decisions and supporting patient-centered solutions, not federally-mandated, one-size-fits-all policies;
- We believe in choosing what kind of education best fits the needs of our children and not letting federal bureaucrats and union-funded policymakers force Washington, D.C.-centered policies into our children's classrooms;
- We understand that while big-city politicians prefer a top down approach to dictate how we manage our lands, it is we who have worked and cared for the land our entire lives who know best how to manage our farms, public lands, and natural resources. We are the original conservationists, not self-proclaimed environmentalists in downtown Seattle.
- We don't skip balancing our checkbooks, nor spend what we don't have, nor burden our children by racking up immense debt, even while that is exactly what the federal government continues to do year after year.
- We stand firm in our conviction that a secure border is vital to our national security. We wholeheartedly believe in safe communities, a strong national defense, and the rule of law—and we back our men and women in Blue.
- We uphold the U.S. Constitution, our traditional values, the sanctity of human life, and religious liberty; and we unreservedly defend both the 1st and 2nd Amendments. We stand for our Flag, and we know that our rights do not come from government—they come from God.

These are all values I hold dear – the values we all as Republicans hold dear – and they have been and continue to be my guiding principles in public service.

Last week, Americans witnessed an assault on the United States Capitol that did nothing to uphold these values. In fact, the events that unfolded that day were the antithesis of what Republicans believe. As a lifelong conservative who cherishes the principles and beliefs I shared

above, I was appalled to see fellow Americans – claiming to be conservatives – attack the symbolic center of our great nation.

I was also gravely disappointed the President of the United States did not do more to stop it. We witnessed these criminals tear down the American flag and trample upon it. We saw brutal attacks on our men and women in uniform that left an officer dead and dozens more injured. Improvised explosive devices were planted around the Capitol Complex, and gallows were built on the lawn of the National Mall with a noose hanging below.

At 2:13 PM that day, Vice President Mike Pence – who until that moment had been fulfilling his Constitutional duty presiding as President of the Senate – was rushed off the Senate floor by the U.S. Secret Service as the angry mob breached the doors of the Capitol. At 2:24 PM, President Trump tweeted, “Mike Pence didn’t have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!” Minutes later, the mob was chanting “Hang Mike Pence!” throughout the halls of Congress.

Let me be clear: Of the tens of thousands of people on the Mall that day, the overwhelming majority were law-abiding patriots simply exercising their Constitutional right to free speech. They – like you and me – are church-going, hard-working Americans supporting President Trump and wanting to ensure our elections are free and secure. Unfortunately, many that day resorted to violence and destruction, and they clearly do not believe in the values you and I do.

As someone who has sponsored a Constitutional amendment prohibiting the desecration of the American Flag every term I’ve been in Congress, it sickened me to witness these criminals tear down Old Glory – a universal symbol of freedom that inspires millions around the globe. As someone who also unequivocally supports our law enforcement – the men and women who risk their lives on a daily basis to protect our communities – I was incensed by the brutal violence brought upon officers that day by a mob of thugs. And as a Constitutional conservative, I believe the effort to thwart the Constitutional duties of the Vice President and the Legislative Branch posed a great threat in jeopardizing the very foundation of our Republic.

President Trump witnessed – as those all around the world were witnessing – a coequal branch of government under attack, and he did not take action to end the chaos while our brave law enforcement officers were overwhelmed. Instead, Vice President Pence – while sheltering in the Capitol – had to be the one to authorize the mobilization of the D.C. National Guard to come to the aid of the Capitol under siege. That utter failure to protect the nation from a domestic threat constituted a breach of the President’s oath.

Impeachment is one of the most serious responsibilities afforded to Congress, and that sobering responsibility has not been lost on me. Over the past four years under President Trump’s Administration, we have made great strides to preserve our shared values, and we have accomplished many of our goals to uphold our conservative beliefs. That was why I was proud to support President Trump’s re-election, including serving as the co-chair of his Washington State

2020 re-election campaign, and it was why I was proud to have his endorsement for my own re-election as well.

My decision to vote for impeachment was the hardest decision I have made in my entire career, and it was not a decision I made lightly. After hours of prayer and internal reflection, I concluded that a vote against this impeachment would have been a vote to validate the unacceptable violence we witnessed in our nation's capital. It would have also been a vote to condone President Trump's inaction. Our country needed a leader, and President Trump failed to fulfill his oath of office.

While we may disagree on my vote, I hope we can agree on this: Our Constitution and the sacred institutions our country was founded upon must be preserved. I encourage every one of us to reflect on the deep divisions in our nation and how we engage with one another, because we must move forward. I am confident that, together, we can continue to be a model for democracy, freedom, and liberty around the world.

Sincerely,

Dan Newhouse