

## **STATEMENTS RELEASED BY UNIONS**

### **IN RESPONSE TO THE JANUARY 6 ASSAULT ON THE U.S. CAPITOL**

Please send to us at [streetheat@dclabor.org](mailto:streetheat@dclabor.org)

**AFL-CIO**

**ACTORS' EQUITY**

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**Union Veterans Council**

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#### **AFL-CIO: Richard Trumka: Attempted coup an unconscionable assault on democracy**

We are witnessing one of the greatest assaults on our democracy since the Civil War. Today's attempted coup has been years in the making as Donald Trump consistently spews venom, conspiracies, hate and lies to his supporters. They are carrying out his wishes, and far too many Republican lawmakers have enabled and even encouraged this violent threat to our republic. Emboldened by an Electoral College system that creates an avenue for insurrection instead of simply certifying the candidate with the most votes, this is an effort to violate the constitutional rights of every law-abiding American and the labor movement will not stand for it. Not today. Not ever.

#### **ACTORS' EQUITY**

This is what white supremacy looks like. This is an attempt to undermine the votes of millions of people of color. We must not let it happen.

#### **AFA Statement on Protecting Aviation Security Following Insurrection at Capitol**

Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA) International President Sara Nelson, representing

nearly 50,000 Flight Attendants at 17 airlines, released the following statement:

"Air travel is safe because everyone follows a strict set of rules, based on the spirit that 'we're all in this together.' The mob mentality behavior that took place on several flights to the D.C. area yesterday was unacceptable and threatened the safety and security of every single person onboard. It will not happen again. There's a reason that there are strict penalties and fines for failing to comply with crewmember instructions. Enforcement keeps everyone safe.

"Our first priority in aviation safety and security is to keep any problems on the ground. Some of the people who traveled in our planes yesterday participated in the insurrection at the Capitol today. Their violent and seditious actions at the Capitol today create further concern about their departure from the DC area. Acts against our democracy, our government, and the freedom we claim as Americans must disqualify these individuals from the freedom of flight.

"We in aviation have a serious role to play in national security. Airlines, in coordination with TSA, DHS, FAA, DOT and law enforcement must take all steps to ensure the safety and security of passengers and crew by keeping all problems on the ground."

#### **AFGE: Largest Federal Workers Union Condemns Anti-Democracy Riots at U.S. Capitol**

Everett Kelley, president of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the largest union representing 700,000 federal employees, today issued the following statement:

"Today, in a shocking scene watched by Americans across the nation, the President of the United States encouraged a mob of anti-democracy protestors to breach the security perimeter of the U.S. Capitol, forcing a lockdown, and endangering the safety of members of Congress, workers at the Capitol, innocent civilians who live nearby, and the law enforcement officials charged with keeping the peace.

"It is nothing short of a desperate attempt to use violence to cling onto power after a clear defeat at the ballot box. These rioters must comply with the wishes of law enforcement and leave the area immediately.

"But no matter what happens today, the people have spoken. Joe Biden will be our next president and Kamala Harris our next vice president. We will not surrender our democracy."

#### **ATU: The ATU condemns unprecedented and heinous assault on democracy**

Amalgamated Transit Union International President John Costa released the following statement in response to today's attempted takeover of the U.S. Capitol building:

"Today is a dark and devastating day in our country's history. What was supposed to be a routine procedure to follow the Constitution and certify the democratically decided election turned into a violent siege on the U.S. Capitol and the foundations of our democracy. While our Nation was founded on freedom of speech and the right to have a voice, this was not an exercise of those rights. We condemn the actions of those turning to violence and mob rule. We will not stand for this unprecedented and heinous assault on our democratic principles."

#### **Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW)**

The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) is infuriated by the attacks at the U.S. Capitol and the enabling of riots by the current administration. There is no question that this is an attack on

our democracy.

Yesterday, there were countless mass protestors seizing the U.S. Capitol Building and damaging property, leaving four people dead. Immediately, House and Senate members had to evacuate for safety. These tragic sequences of events have proven that the current administration has accepted these violent assaults even when it can cause severe damage to our democracy.

At CLUW, we vow to do everything we can to save our democracy from destruction. Over 200 years, our democracy has relied on a peaceful transition of power. And we continue to ensure the Biden-Harris transition in 2021. Protecting our governance is not right or left; it's American. CLUW President Elise Bryant shared the following words:

Today, when armed protesters, bent on violence, came to the Capitol where were the troops? What happened to the tear gas and the rubber bullets? The attempted coup, inflamed by a loser, soon to be ex-president, is the America that Donald Trump hopes will keep him in office. Well, he's wrong and so are his co-conspirators! America's might is not in her weapons, but in the hearts of her people who know right from wrong. A crime has been committed and those who engaged or enabled it shall be investigated, charged, and will pay for their crimes. We, the people, have spoken — it's time for a new president and today's lawlessness is proof positive it is time for a change!

We will continue to fight to protect our democracy.

**IAM: Robert Martinez Jr. @IAMBobMartinez**

Violence is never the answer. The rioters in Washington, DC will not stop our sacred traditions of democracy and the peaceful transfer of power. The @MachinistsUnion and the labor movement will not stand for it.

**IBEW**

IBEW International President Lonnie R. Stephenson issued the following statement in response to today's attack on the U.S Capitol:

"Today's attack on the U.S. Capitol by violent extremists represents a direct assault on our democratic system. Blame for this horrific event lies directly on the shoulders of President Trump and his enablers in Congress, who have deliberately spread disinformation about the validity of the 2020 election, threatened our constitutional system by disregarding the will of America's voters and promoted an atmosphere of violence that led to what happened today. For too long, Trump's extremist rhetoric, venomous attacks and deranged conspiracy theories have undermined America's faith in democracy, divided Americans against each other and poisoned political debate in this nation.

It's clear that one more day of Trump in office represents a direct threat to the health of our republic and we demand his immediate resignation. If Trump does not resign, we call on Vice President Mike Pence and members of the cabinet to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove him.

We also condemn the efforts of some Republican lawmakers to overturn the will of the American people by refusing to certify the results of the Electoral College. This represents an

unprecedented effort to invalidate a democratic election.

Any member of Congress who attempts to thwart the will of the American people as expressed in a democratically held presidential election has no place in the people's house."

### **IFPTE Condemns Insurrection Attempt on U.S. Capitol**

#### **TRUMP AND SUPPORTERS AIM TO OVERTHROW THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

The International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE) issued the following statement in response to the insurrection attempt by President Trump and his supporters today at the United States Capitol.

"IFPTE categorically condemns the violent act of insurrection by President Trump and thousands of his supporters. The blame falls clearly with President Trump himself, and his enablers in Congress, who have instigated and encouraged today's seditious actions. The people who stormed and took control of our historic Capitol destroyed property, took over offices, and took over chambers of Congress itself, while staff and members were escorted to secure areas to protect their lives. IFPTE further understands that one person was shot and has tragically succumbed to her injuries".

"Make no mistake about it, this is a transparent effort to overturn a presidential election. It is a culmination of many attempts to undermine our Democracy and prevent our Democratically elected President-Elect from assuming office on January 20th. These people are not 'protestors', they are domestic terrorists and should be treated as such in the eyes of the law. The United States does not bow to domestic terrorism."

"IFPTE calls on Vice President Pence to exercise the 25th Amendment and move to immediately have President Trump removed from office. Furthermore, and as soon as it is safe to do so, IFPTE encourages Congress to finish their work and certify the Presidential election."

### **IUPAT (PAINTERS)**

We are saddened by today's flagrant attack on our democracy. The attempted coup has been instigated by too many Republican politicians, namely @realDonaldTrump. Any politician who incited or promoted what happened today is no friend of workers. We stand with our sisters and brothers in the labor movement ready to defend our democratic institutions.

LCLAA vehemently condemns the acts of violence and insurrection that took place in our nation's capital on Wednesday, January 6, 2021. This seditious and lamentable event, was led by extremist and racist groups in an attempt to change the results of the presidential election. What is worse, this assault on our democracy was encouraged by the very person who is supposed to guarantee American safety; President Trump.

Since taking office in 2017, Trump has done nothing but divide our country, by planting hatred and bigotry. For far too long Trump has fed lies and misinformation to his supporters, through incendiary messages that undermined our nation's democracy, the will of the people, and therefore resulted in these unacceptable acts of domestic terrorism.

Yesterday we witnessed Trump applaud this despicable attempted coup, yet a few months ago, he condemned scores of Americans who took to the streets in defense of Breonna Taylor, George

Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery's life, to name just three of the countless lives that have been lost due to the escalation in racial injustice.

### **Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)**

LCLAA stands with a growing number of legislators who believe that the president's removal from office is warranted. The most immediate way of doing so would be by invoking the 25 Amendment. This would require Vice President Pence, along with a majority of the Cabinet to declare the President *"unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office,"* in a written declaration. Additionally we demand that all elected officials who have enabled the president's detrimental actions be held accountable. LCLAA will remain committed to peacefully mobilizing and elevating the voices of workers who have spoken through the power of their vote and therefore protecting the democratic values that characterize our nation.

*"We are witnessing a blatant attempt against the voice of the people, against voters and the constitution and democratic processes and values, and it is shameful to see that it is our nation's president, the one who is encouraging this illegal insurrection,"* said **Yanira Merino, LCLAA National President.** *"It is our responsibility to ensure that our elected officials respect the will of the people, and LCLAA is committed to continuing mobilizing and peacefully elevating our voices of working families and in defense of our democracy."*

*"We cannot sit and silently contemplate our rights being ripped away from us, and our voices being silenced. LCLAA joins those who are demanding immediate action be taken in order to hold those responsible for yesterday's seditious acts, fully accountable,"* said **Jose Vargas, LCLAA Executive Director.** *Yesterday's violent mob, largely remained unmolested by police authorities, a stark contrast to what we have seen happen to protestors of color, who for over a year have peacefully taken to the streets their demand for equal rights, and have been met with tear gas, rubber bullets, and swinging batons. We need congress to act now in order to eradicate the hatred, divisions, and mayhem that this president has instituted as part of his policy agenda. Our nation's future depends on us acting today.*

### **North America's Building Trades Unions' (NABTU)**

**NABTU CALLS FOR PRESIDENT TRUMP TO STEP DOWN IMMEDIATELY**

WASHINGTON, DC – Jan. 6, 2021 — Today, North America's Building Trades Unions' (NABTU) President Sean McGarvey released the following statement in response to the mob of domestic terrorists that attacked the U.S. Capitol building during the electoral college certification proceedings:

*"Today's despicable events are unprecedented, and, as we have all seen, are extremely dangerous. North America's Building Trades Unions call on President Trump to immediately step down and transfer power per the Constitution and the Presidential Succession Act of 1947. If he refuses, the Cabinet must immediately invoke the 25th amendment to remove the President. Any less action by the Cabinet, and America should consider them all co-conspirators.*

*"We also call on Senators Cruz and Hawley to immediately resign along with the twelve other U.S. Senators and the 140 House members objecting to the Electoral College certification. They all must step down immediately.*

*"We call on a bipartisan commission to investigate and identify all planners, funders, and*

coordinators of this attempted coup and refer them to prosecution by the U.S. Justice Department, and further for them to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

“If these actions are not taken immediately, in anticipation of what is already one of the worst domestic episodes in our country’s history, things could get much worse over the next 14 days very quickly. Thus, we urge all law-abiding Americans to stand up and demand the same to protect our precious democracy from tyrants and thugs.”

### **NewsGuild-CWA**

*Jon Schleuss, President*

Yesterday’s insurrection at the U.S. Capitol was a threat to democracy and an assault on press freedoms. While a violent mob roamed the Capitol, reporters continued doing their jobs, despite knowing that they were likely targets of the attackers since silencing the free press has long been a strategy for fascists. Police temporarily abandoned several floors where reporters were located, putting them at even greater risk.

This shameful assault is the direct result of the rhetoric spewed by politicians incapable of accepting the truth, or cynically relying on falsehoods to inflame division for political gain. The president and lawmakers who spread these lies have blood on their hands.

Outside the Capitol, an angry and violent mob attacked camera crews and reporters, stealing and damaging equipment. Although few rioters were arrested, in the evening police briefly detained journalists as they worked to cover the mayhem, despite the fact that journalists were clearly exempted from the D.C. curfew.

Thankfully it appears that no journalists were severely injured yesterday.

“Yesterday was an absolute embarrassment for the U.S.” said NewsGuild-CWA President Jon Schleuss. “It’s the role of the free press in a democracy to report, give context and inform the public, especially during times of chaos.

“The world witnessed the assault on our democracy thanks to the courageous work of journalists who put themselves in harm’s way to report the news. I saw what the rest of the world saw—a deluded mob invading our house of democracy in an attempt to subvert an election,” Schleuss added.

Immediate action must be taken to stabilize and support the core base of our democracy: a free press informing the electorate.

Media literacy should be required in schools: Yesterday’s mob acted on lies spread by politicians and operatives intent on spreading misinformation. It’s clear that we need to prioritize media literacy in our education system. Too many people accept lies and conspiracy theories as fact. Media literacy education would provide our children with the skills necessary to understand the intent behind messages: understanding bias, determining fact from fiction and looking for alternative sources of information. Media literacy is essential if we intend to confront extremism, radicalization and racism.

More local news jobs now: The chaos and discord we are seeing is in part due to the erosion of local news across the U.S. There are more than 40,000 fewer journalists working in America today than there were a decade ago, which has left a vacuum that increasingly is filled with

conspiracy theories and partisan propaganda. The pandemic has sped up the loss of journalists across the U.S., with more than 11,000 journalists losing their jobs just in the first half of 2020. Greedy corporations, media consolidation and the gutting of newsrooms by financial players has robbed us of local truth tellers. Hedge funds and greedy private equity have been robbing us of our democracy. They need to be rooted out of our industry and we must invest in more local news jobs: through the work of local do-gooders, foundations and public support. Public policy must support a free and robust press.

Police must stop interfering with reporters: This summer dozens of reporters were targeted, assaulted and arrested by police all across the United States: after the murder of George Floyd in Minnesota, the protests in Los Angeles and in Washington, D.C. Police must be held accountable and prosecuted for interfering with the First Amendment rights of reporters gathering and disseminating the news.

### **NNU: Nurses Denounce Insurrection at U.S. Capitol**

"Those Responsible Should be Held Accountable"

National Nurses United (NNU) joined with people across the United States to express shock and horror at the right-wing assault on the U.S. Capitol today and called for those promoting it to be held accountable.

"Nurses agree with the statement by President-elect Biden that 'our democracy is under unprecedented assault, unlike anything we have seen in modern times' and his labelling of the violent assault on the Capitol today as 'insurrection,'" said NNU Executive Director Bonnie Castillo, RN.

"As nurses, we are deeply disturbed by the scenes of violence and threats to our elected leaders, the dedicated people who work in the Capitol, and anyone else subjected to this unconscionable attack on our most fundamental symbols of democracy," said Castillo.

"This was a violent attempt to stop Congress from confirming the people's choice for president and vice president. As such, it's an attack on democracy itself, instigated by the president of the United States," Castillo continued.

Sadly, "the actions we have seen unfold today are the inevitable result of what President Trump has inspired and incited for years, from encouraging attacks on protesters at his rallies and on officials ordering safety measures in response to the pandemic, to embracing armed white supremacists, to the constant demonization, in the starkest of terms, of his political opponents."

"All of that has escalated in the weeks leading to the election, and especially after the November vote when the president has denounced the legitimacy of a democratic election, promoted outlandish conspiracy theories, and urged his armed supporters to act to 'save this country.'"

"The president has been encouraging sedition. No one is above the law," said Castillo. "He is responsible for the scenes we have seen today at the Capitol and he should be held accountable."

Going forward, after Biden's inauguration, "we as a nation must come together to begin to

heal, to refocus first and foremost on containing this terrible pandemic, and on being able to respect political differences and rebuild a democracy that has been so endangered.”

### **PRIDE AT WORK**

*Statement by Pride at Work Executive Director, Jerame Davis, on the attack on the US Capitol today:*

"What we're witnessing at the Capitol today is nothing less than an attack on our country and on our people brought to life by a president who refuses to accept that millions turned out to elect Joe Biden by overwhelming margins.

"Let there be no doubt, this is what terrorism looks like: an angry mob violently invading our Capitol and threatening our elected leaders, even the very Republican leaders - who egged them on.

"We are here today due to the cheering of some Republicans and the silence of others. This president and his Republican allies fed lie after lie to their supporters about this election in order to undermine the will of the people and desperately attempt to hold onto power they clearly do not deserve.

"They will not prevail."

### **SEIU 32BJ (DC)**

Jaime Contreras, Vice President of 32BJ SEIU, the largest property service workers union in the country, representing a majority Black and immigrant essential workforce with over 175,000 members in 11 states, including over 20,000 in the D.C. area and Baltimore, MD:

“As a union representing mostly Black and Brown workers, last night’s horrific events were traumatizing for so many of these essential workers who saw an angry violent mob met with passive policing and deference from those charged with the safety of our nation’s capital. The treatment of these domestic terrorists is a smack in the face for all of us who watched and joined peaceful Black Lives Matter marches just this summer in D.C., only to be confronted by police in riot gear with tanks, tear gas, and rubber bullets. Yesterday highlighted for many of us the stark difference of how we are treated based on nothing more than the color of our skin.

“Our hearts are with all the essential workers in D.C., who had to make their way home in the midst of chaos after the curfew last night. Our union has been focused on keeping members in the D.C. area safe and ensuring they were allowed to go home, but still be paid. Many of these immigrant essential workers escaped violent insurrections in their own homelands, only to find one in their backyard.

“What the world witnessed was sedition and the worst, unchecked white supremacy that long precedes Donald Trump and has been further enabled by Republicans at all levels of government. Last night laid bare the deep, dark cracks in our broken nation that Trump and his supporters, including Republican leaders have exacerbated through never-ending and dangerous lies that have led to this violence.

“That’s why, the only way to move our nation forward is to not just remove Trump immediately, but demand that all elected officials, including Republicans accept responsibility and commit to becoming part of the solution to our national crisis. This means helping to make changes to the systemic and structural racism that creates and perpetuates the social, economic and disparities that leads to law enforcement criminalizing and killing Black and Brown people, just as it leads to those same people being infected by COVID-19 at devastating rates, and bearing a greater burden of the pandemic’s economic fallout.

“Despite last night’s interruption, these terrorists did not win. We are starting a new, brighter era under a Biden Presidency as well as a Democratic-led Congress and Senate that now includes Georgia’s first Black Senator. We will restore power into the hands of essential workers who have kept us safe and our economy running.”

### **UA (PLUMBERS)**

GP MCMANUS STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE AT U.S. CAPITOL TODAY

“Today’s vote to certify the Electoral College results is one of many steps in the sacred and peaceful transition of power in this country. The right to peacefully protest is enshrined in the Constitution, but today’s display of lawlessness and violence is dangerous and a threat to our democracy.

Make no mistake about it: the rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol today have no interest in the rule of law. We are grateful to law enforcement and the first responders who have worked tirelessly, and continue to do so, to protect Members of Congress, their staffs, and our fellow American citizens.

In any election, the very heart of our democracy is at stake – regardless of your political affiliation or preference. Loyal opposition and advocating for your beliefs, peacefully and within the law, should and must be the norm. For over 131 years, the United Association has followed this norm even as we have disagreed with a wide range of politicians, and we will continue to do so.

Quite frankly, we are better than this as a country and as a society at large.

Every UA member can do his or her part to respect all opinions, look out for our collective families, and try to be a positive force in this country we all love.”

### **UAW**

“This is a very sad day for our nation and our democracy. This is not how this great nation, nor responsible citizens handle elections or our differences.

We are a better people than this storming mob and I am optimistic that despite today’s events, we will regain our footing and we will move forward for the greater good of all of us. As a nation, we are learning in a profound way that we all have a personal responsibility to safeguard this democracy.

We cannot take our system of government for granted and we must be vigilant to ensure that our democracy maintains its historical position as the gold standard for freedom and liberty.

Today's actions must not be allowed to alter that.

This is truly a singular point in our history. The violence at the Capitol today is a deliberate and despicable attempt by extremists to disrupt our great republic. It will not succeed. We, as a nation, are stronger than this one shameful incident. There is room in this great democracy, as in our own union, for disagreement. It is one of the great strengths of our democratic system. We are better than that and today above all, we must remember that there is more that unites us than divides us. There is absolutely no room for this type of mob rule in a functioning democratic system.

This is a day none of us should or will ever forget. But please let us remember that there is much work to be done — and we must take the personal responsibility to do it together. We are the United States and unite we must. I urge us all to work together to move forward and heal our nation.”

### **Union Veterans Council**

Statement on Insurrection and attempted coup in #WashingtonDC

"As service members, we fought for the safety of our democracy and the sanctity of our constitution, and we will not stand to see violent extremists and political enablers attack both"

### **Washington-Baltimore News Guild**

Statement on Violence at the US Capitol

Yesterday's violence at the US Capitol building was a direct attack on our democracy and our democratic institutions, carried out by armed insurrectionists wielding symbols of hate, and encouraged by the sitting President of the United States. Before being allowed to peacefully leave the building, the terrorists scribbled a message on one of the building's doors: "Murder the media."

This event was the culmination of four years of dangerous rhetoric, rooted in white supremacy, that has spread lies and disinformation to advance an anti-democratic agenda. Our union is incredibly proud of the brave and diligent work of our members who were on the ground at the Capitol building yesterday, some of whom faced intimidation, harassment, and vandalism at the hands of the insurrectionists as they stood their ground to make sure that the nation was honestly and accurately informed about what was taking place.

The Washington-Baltimore News Guild strongly condemns the attempted coup and the violent intimidation and threats to our members and journalists everywhere. Never has the need for a free press been more necessary than in moments like these. The News Guild will always fight to defend the rights of working people everywhere. We will never stop working to make sure our newsrooms, non-profits, and unions reflect the diversity and inclusivity that is so desperately needed to lead this country to a better future.