

we were going about our business, all of a sudden, I felt a hand pull my collar. My security detail gripped me by the arm and told me we had to get out—that a mob of rioters had broken into the Capitol and that we were not safe. I looked to the podium and saw Vice President Pence quickly being rushed out of the Chamber by his detail. As we evacuated, accompanied by two Capitol Police officers, we took a turn down the hallway, opened the door, and came within several yards of angry rioters before my security detail pulled us away to safety. We were maybe within 20 feet of them. Had one of them blocked the door or had a gun, Lord knows what would have happened.

Thus began one of the darkest, most shameful days in American history—of our democracy. That was 4 years ago today.

Less than an hour from now, the House and Senate shall convene for a joint session of Congress to complete the process of certifying the 2024 Presidential election. Today, we will not see the violence we saw 4 years ago. Today, the process will return to normal and remain solemn but peaceful. We are here today to continue the transfer of power, to acknowledge what the people have already decided and nothing more. Unfortunately, today stands in sharp contrast to what happened 4 years ago.

On that day, lawlessness and mob violence sought to bring democracy to its knees. Staff and Members of Congress hid beneath desks, barricaded the doors of their offices; rioters smashed windows and ransacked offices and broke into the Senate and House Chambers. Insurrectionists waved Confederate flags and donned Nazi symbols. Pipe bombs were planted near the DNC and RNC. This was in no way a peaceful protest. This was not even a protest that got out of hand. This was a deliberate and, in some cases, premeditated attempt to subvert the democratic process through intimidation and violence. It was one of the most shameful, reprehensible episodes in the history of this great Nation, and it happened because the loser of the 2020 election refused to accept defeat.

We cannot let anyone whitewash what happened here 4 years ago. Far too many individuals have tried to rewrite the history of January 6, have tried to sweep the truth under the rug and pretend like the day was perfectly fine or even a moment of great patriotism. That is a lie. Plain and simple—a lie. Future generations must never forget the truth. January 6, 2021, was a day that a violent mob tried to halt the results of a Presidential election. It was a direct assault on American democracy.

On that day, our Capitol Police faced their hour of maximum danger, but they responded with maximum valor. Outnumbered and overwhelmed, the Capitol Police and all of our first responders became the defenders of our democracy. Today, we honor all the

members of the Capitol Police, the DC police, our servicemembers, and all first responders who kept us safe 4 years ago as well as everyone who has kept us safe since.

We acknowledge and thank all of the Capitol staff who stayed late into the night to restore order and clean the wreckage left behind by the rioters. They did their job without fanfare, without complaint, and away from the spotlight. They join our first responders as the unsung heroes of our democracy—every one.

We mourn, of course, all those whose lives were lost in connection with the attack. We mourn the brave officers who died in the days and weeks and months after the attack. We pray for their families and that they find comfort and grace. And it is shamefully, utterly outrageous that the President is considering pardons for these rioters who broke the law and attacked our police officers on January 6. Pardoning the criminals who assaulted police officers and tried to halt the democratic process would be a dangerous endorsement of political violence. It would send a message to the country and to the world that those who use force to get their way will not be punished. It is wrong; it is reckless; and it would be an insult to the memory of those who died in connection to that day.

On that day, the rioters tried to halt the peaceful transfer of power, but as we know, they failed. The insurrection failed because our democracy is stronger than the gale force winds of mob violence. The rioters failed that day because Democrats and Republicans were united amidst a storm of utter lawlessness and committed to finishing the job of certifying the election.

As hard as January 6 was, it will be one of my proudest moments in office because, on that day, the majority of us united to uphold our oaths to the Constitution. I still remember that, at around 5 p.m. this day, Leader McConnell, Speaker PELOSI, Leader McCarthy, and I gathered and said: We are going back into session now, and we are going to count the votes. We decided this despite the worries of some that the Capitol was not yet safe—and we did. We were not going to let the rioters interfere with our democracy. It was a historic moment of bipartisanism, where both sides united in the protection of our democracy.

I mention January 6, 2021, for many reasons. I mention January 6 to remind everyone that democracy is precious and can at times be a fragile thing. I mention January 6 to set the record straight for all coming time so that future generations may know the truth of what happened on that day and that they remain vigilant against future attacks on our democracy. I mention January 6 to warn this generation and future generations of the immense dangers that arise when election denialism is tolerated and excused and propagated. We can never ever again allow the level of unhinged election

denialism to happen, not from Republicans, not from Democrats, not from anyone.

We are setting an example today. Even though the elections did not go the Democrats' way, I want to be very clear: On this January 6, our side will not engage in election denialism. We Democrats accept the will of the people. We accept the results even when we don't like them because our loyalties lie with the Constitution and with the rule of law. We hope what happens today rather than what happened 4 years ago stands as a shining example for future generations of how one conducts oneself in a free democracy.

We hope that the way we Democrats conduct ourselves today helps those Republicans who tried to subvert the election of 4 years ago understand the grave nature of their mistake. Far too many on the other side—far too many—willingly claim the election of 2020 was stolen even though they knew perfectly well it was not. Of course, I know plenty of my Republican colleagues, including my friend the former Republican leader, did not participate in the attempts to undermine the election 4 years ago, but too many did. If we want to prevent another attack like January 6, neither side can ever again tolerate the kind of conspiratorial madness we saw 4 years ago, and it starts by setting an example and doing the right thing today no matter which side got their way in the electoral process.

On this, the 4-year anniversary of the Capitol attack, the only obstruction we will see is the obstruction coming from the storm. Even then, Mother Nature will not be able to stop us from doing our jobs today. Today, we will convene; we will do our jobs; and then we move on to the business of governing for the American people because that is what our oaths demand of us.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 1. Concurrent resolution extending the life of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

S. Con. Res. 2. Concurrent resolution to provide for the counting on January 6, 2025, of the electoral votes for President and Vice President of the United States.

S. Con. Res. 3. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for the lying in state of the remains of the late James Earl Carter, Jr., 39th President of the United States.

The message also announced that the House agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 1. Concurrent resolution regarding consent to assemble outside the seat of government.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to H. Res. 1, resolving that Kevin McCumber of the State of Illinois be, and is hereby chosen Clerk of the House of Representatives; that William McFarland of the State of Maryland be, and is hereby, chosen Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives; and that Catherine Szpindor of the Commonwealth of Virginia be, and is hereby, chosen Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to H. Res. 2, resolving that the Senate be informed that a quorum of the House of Representatives has assembled; that MIKE JOHNSON, a Representative from the State of Louisiana, has been elected speaker; and that Kevin McCumber, a citizen of the State of Illinois, has been elected Clerk of the House of Representatives of the One Hundred Nineteenth Congress.

The message further announced that the Speaker appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to join a committee on the part of the Senate to notify the President of the United States that a quorum of each House has assembled, and Congress is ready to receive any communication that he may be pleased to make: The gentleman from Louisiana Mr. SCALISE and the gentleman from New York Mr. JEFFRIES.

The message also announced that pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution 1, 119th Congress, and the order of

the House of January 3, 2025, the Speaker reappoints the following Members on the part of the House of Representatives to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana, Mr. SCALISE of Louisiana, and Mr. JEFFRIES of New York.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 5. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. BRITT (for herself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. LEE, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. WICKER, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MORENO, Mr. MORAN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BUDD, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MARSHALL, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. BANKS, Ms. ERNST, Mr. MULLIN, and Mr. HAGERTY):

S. 5. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody

aliens who have been charged in the United States with theft, and for other purposes; read the first time.

JOINT SESSION OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE FOR COUNTING OF ELECTORAL VOTES

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the provisions of S. Con. Res. 2, the Senate will proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., preceded by the Sergeant at Arms, Jennifer A. Hemingway; the Secretary of the Senate, Jackie Barber; and the Vice President of the United States, KAMALA D. HARRIS, proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the counting of the electoral votes pursuant to the requirements of the Constitution and laws relating to the election of President and Vice President of the United States.

(The counting of the electoral votes in the joint session of the House and Senate is printed in the proceedings of the House of Representatives in today's RECORD.)

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M. TOMORROW

At the conclusion of the joint session of the two Houses, and in accordance with the order previously entered, at 1:36 p.m., the Senate adjourned until Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 11 a.m.