

The Honorable Bennie Thompson
Chair, Select Committee on the January 6th Insurrection
2466 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

July 29, 2021

Mr. Thompson,

Our democracy is under attack. The violent insurrection at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021 was one component of a broader effort to use every means available to try to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

The events that transpired on that fateful day were not spontaneous. They were the product of months of groundwork by individuals, organizations, and public officials who engaged in a deliberate effort to discredit and undermine faith in U.S. election procedures and results. And despite the damage caused and lives lost on January 6, 2021, the assault on our democracy has continued. The same lies that motivated a mob to attack the seat of our government continue to be actively spread by prominent political and media figures and are now being used to justify new restrictions on the voting rights of Americans in at least 14 states across the country, as well as provisions that could allow political actors to overturn the popular vote in some states.¹ The right of every American to vote and to have their vote counted is in jeopardy.

That is why the investigation that the Select Committee on the January 6th Insurrection is undertaking is so crucial. The undersigned groups applaud the committee's strong launch with the compelling testimony that was presented during its July 27 hearing, and we write to request that you embark on an investigation that continues to rise to the challenge of this moment in our history. The Committee must deliver an authoritative account of efforts to discredit or change the results of the 2020 election and the violent events that occurred on January 6, 2021 in Washington D.C., including the role(s) of any federal or state official in those events. The committee must make recommendations for policy or legislative changes to prevent similar events from occurring again. And the committee must not shy away from referring matters meriting collateral investigation to the Department of Justice or House and Senate ethics authorities—including any efforts to obstruct the committee's investigation.

We have prepared a set of topics that we believe merit further investigation by your committee to ensure that the American people understand the peril our democracy faces. Several committees have already begun to scrutinize the security failures that allowed a violent mob to interrupt Congress's acceptance and ratification of the 2020 election results on that fateful day; however, insufficient scrutiny has been paid to the months of groundwork that led to this attack

¹ See Voting Laws Roundup, *Brennan Center*, May 2021, available at <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-may-2021>.

and the role of top elected officials in encouraging the violence. We respectfully request that you seek to answer the following questions about the January 6 attacks and associated efforts to undermine American democracy:

- What was the nature and extent of coordination between the President, Vice President, White House officials, and trusted confidants of the President (e.g. Roger Stone, Rudy Giuliani, etc) and
 - groups planning “stop the steal” and similar rallies;
 - groups planning to try to interrupt Congressional proceedings on January 6;
 - members of Congress who tried to prevent certification of the 2020 election; and
 - state officials, including attorneys general, who tried to prevent certification of the 2020 election?

- What were the number, type, mode, and substance of all communications that occurred from September 1, 2020 to January 20, 2021 between the President, Vice President, senior White House officials, and/or trusted confidants of the President (e.g. Roger Stone, Rudy Giuliani, etc) and:
 - U.S. Department of Justice officials about election-related matters;
 - law enforcement or military officials (including the FBI, Capitol Police, MPD, National Guard, Department of Defense, Secret Service, etc.) about threat assessments, security plans, or operational status/preparedness in advance of and on January 6;
 - members of Congress about efforts to change the results of the 2020 election, efforts to discredit the results of the 2020 election, and related public appearances or events; and
 - State officials with real or perceived power to change election results?

- To what extent did each of the following contribute to widespread belief that the 2020 election was rigged/stolen:
 - Public messaging by candidates for the presidency, their affiliates, lawyers, and other representatives (both before and after the election);
 - Public messaging by state officials, including state election officials, legislators, governors, and secretaries of state;
 - Public messaging by third parties, including nonprofits, superPACs, and other individuals challenging election procedures and processes (both before and after the election);
 - Lawsuits filed by the Trump campaign and related entities;
 - Media companies that actively spread misinformation; and
 - Misinformation spread on social media and other online platforms?

- What is the nature, if any, of links and extent of coordination between individuals and groups that participated in “stop the steal” and similar rallies, including January 6, 2021 and:
 - armed protests at the Virginia statehouse in January 2020;

- armed protests at the Michigan state capitol in April and May 2020;
 - armed protests at the Oregon statehouse in December 2020; and
 - other armed rallies, protests, or demonstrations at state or federal facilities before or after January 6, 2021?
- Who funded, provided in-kind donations, coordinated, or contributed other forms of assistance to:
 - efforts to discredit election processes and procedures prior to the 2020 general elections;
 - the “stop the steal” and similar rallies between November 3, 2020 and January 6, 2021;
 - the rally held in Washington D.C. on the morning of January 6, 2021;
 - the travel of individuals who participated in the rally or events at the Capitol Building on January 6, 2021; and
 - the groups that planned the rally on January 6, 2021?
- What assistance, if any, did members of Congress, their offices, and their employees give to individuals who participated in the January 6, 2021 attack, including any tours or visits to the U.S. Capitol?
- What role, if any, did foreign actors play in the insurrection or events leading up to the insurrection, including:
 - funding individuals or groups that participated in the January 6, 2021 attack or “stop the steal” rallies;
 - propagating misinformation about the 2020 election; and
 - coordinating with individuals, groups, campaigns, or other U.S. individuals or entities?
- What information was the committee unable to collect due to:
 - shortcomings in transparency requirements for
 - Political campaigns, committees, etc.;
 - Social media outlets that sell political ads;
 - Nonprofit organizations engaging in political activity;
 - assertions of executive privilege;
 - assertions of the 5th Amendment right against self-incrimination; and
 - noncompliant witnesses, organizations or agencies?
- What policy and legal changes would the committee recommend to diminish risks to future federal elections, including:
 - amendments to federal election laws that could deter efforts by state officials to invalidate lawfully cast votes;
 - amendments to election laws that could limit or deter false claims about election results, procedures, or administration;

- state and federal laws protecting against interference in the process for certifying election results by state election officials, members of the electoral college, and members of Congress
- protections against the misuse or politicization of federal law enforcement entities by a sitting president; and
- amendments to anti-corruption laws, including the Hatch Act, Federal Vacancies Reform Act, and other rules and institutions intended to protect against the misuse of federal resources and power for personal or political advantage?

Thank you and the other distinguished members of the special committee for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
American Oversight
Government Information Watch
Open the Government
People for the American Way