



DEMOCRACY DEFENDERS

Concerned Citizens Defending Democracy

Promoting Democratic Institutions, Deliberative Dialogues, and Racial Justice and Reconciliation

By Building Bridges and Strengthening Partnerships

<https://www.cddus.org/>

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Is Democracy in the United States in a State of Critical Crisis?

At the recent January 6th Committee hearings, retired Appeals Court Justice J. Michael Luttig, a key legal advisor to then Vice President Pence and an icon in conservative circles, believes it is. After his dramatic testimony to the Committee he issued a statement warning that democracy in the U.S. is in deep crisis and requires an alert and active citizenry to defend it. Click the link for the statement.



Opinion

So Far So Good: Seven Takeaways from the January 6 Committee Hearings to Date

By Vivian Lowery Derryck

The January 6 Select Committee has uncovered a breathtaking plot to thwart Joe Biden's legitimate election and install Donald Trump for a second term as president that was months in the planning, and involved all three branches of the federal government as well as state officials from at least five battleground states. Here are seven takeaways from the hearings so far.

1. Our institutions were resilient in providing a legal and rules-based governance framework for the investigation, but the successful outcome depended on individuals, largely senior bureaucrats and high-level appointed officials who can manipulate the institutions for good or for malfeasance.
2. Reluctant patriots like Acting Attorney General Jeffery Rosen and Acting Deputy Attorney General Richard Donoghue, or diffident patriots like former Attorney General Bill Barr and former Vice President Mike Pence, should be commended for doing their jobs and fulfilling their oaths of office, but they should not be given hero status. They would have been heroes if they had publicly debunked the "Big Lie" at the outset of the Stop the Steal campaign in November 2019, perhaps nipping it in the bud, but certainly their collective voices would have filtered into social media, providing a fact-based counter-narrative.
3. The American public has had a lesson in federalism: the states run elections. We saw the importance of states in administering elections from registration to balloting to counting and tallying the votes, and learned the multiple vulnerabilities of our system, a system that has been the default reference and the global gold standard since the post- World War II decolonization movement.
4. Longstanding U.S. election processes/procedures have been eviscerated and qualified workers are scarce. One in six election workers has been threatened or attacked according to a March 2022 Brennan Center survey. Last summer the Department of Justice set up the Election Threats Task Force to deal with the thousands of complaints, but has only brought three cases to trial.

This lack of consequences has resulted in wholesale election worker resignations, such as those of Shaye Moss and her mother Ruby Freeman, as shared in their dramatic testimony at the third hearing. This is a major problem, rife with opportunities for mischief at the midterms as new workers intent on ensuring a predetermined outcome they want are hired.

5. In high profile Congressional hearings like the Jan 6 Committee inquiry, command of social media can determine who controls the narrative, wins the hearts and minds, and gets to tell the enduring story of the insurrection. Former President Trump and his MAGA machine have been masterful in shaping the narrative.

According to a [Politico/Morning Consult survey](#) after the January 6 Committee's third hearing: While 62% of Americans say they did not watch the panel's second and third hearings held last week, 58% say they have heard or read about them. When asked about whom they blame for the events leading up to the Capitol riots, Americans overwhelmingly - by 81% - accuse the rioters themselves, 56% accuse Trump, 48% point to Republicans in Congress, and 34% put the onus on congressional Democrats. Twenty-eight percent blame President Biden and 27% say it's the fault of then-Vice President Mike Pence.

The Committee has been superb in laying out the case and bringing incontrovertible evidence, but confirmation bias (the tendency to process new information in a way that conforms to your existing beliefs) has played an outsized role and is difficult to overcome.

6. We may be facing a situation in which loyalty to an individual or political party trumps loyalty to our country and its ideals. Cleavages may be too great for objective facts to change perspectives. Now, more than ever, we need to reach out to our concentric circles as trusted sources and share a narrative of objective facts in a language of values: truth, loyalty to country, keeping faith with an oath, legacy of a proud democracy for our children and grandchildren.
7. We have to stay focused on legislation, especially the [Electoral Count Act](#), to ensure that the process is strengthened to ensure that every vote counts and is allocated to the candidate the voter chose. We cannot get caught up in retribution or the fate of Donald Trump and his allies. Keep your eyes on the prize of free and fair elections and Get Out The Vote 2022.

As Abraham Lincoln said, "And this, too, shall pass."

Opinion

Get Out The Vote

By Robert J. Berg

Ensuring a free and fair elections is a major concern to members of Concerned Citizens Defending Democracy (CCDD) and their concentric circles. We in CCDD believe that we should all unite on this high priority of the moment: working on Get Out the Vote campaigns in the upcoming November and 2024 elections. Current predictions are that most potential voters, except for fringe voters, do not plan to vote in November. That is deeply worrisome since Democracy is at stake in so many of the upcoming local, state and national elections. We need elected officials who uphold fair voting, and not ones who are trying to deny voters the right to vote or want to manipulate the results.

A high priority for us is to focus on Youth, Women, People of Color, and members of Religious congregations. There are many existing organizations focusing on these four important groups of voters and a roster of them will be forthcoming.

What can we all do?

1. Talk up the upcoming election and encourage our families, friends and networks to vote, particularly for candidates who stand firmly for free and fair elections.
2. Look over the list of national organizations working on get out the vote campaigns (to be distributed soon) and try to include ones you like in your personal contributions of time and money.
3. Encourage your local media to write about efforts in your area to help get out the vote.
4. Encourage your civil society and religious groups to urge their members to get out the vote for upholders of democracy.
5. Encourage your employers, especially ones in the private sector, to donate to get out the vote efforts and give employees timeoff to vote.

Many observers of our country, at home and abroad, see our democracy as being at a critical juncture. The peaceful way out of this crisis is to vote for democracy every chance we get.

Poor People's Campaign



Click link for a video of the historic event.



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