

U.S. Sen. Johnson: Statement

Posted on Thursday, Jan 7, 2021

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

What follows is the speech I was going to deliver on the Senate floor explaining my concerns about the election in Arizona. Unfortunately, lawless protesters entered the Capitol and by consensus we decided to expedite the proceedings. I condemn the lawlessness and mourn the loss of life that occurred in the Capitol. I believe the sentiments expressed below are valid concerns of the millions of Americans who also condemn today's illegal activities in the Capitol.

I refuse to dismiss the legitimate concerns of tens of millions of Americans who have lost faith in our institutions and the fairness of our electoral process.

Those who have lost confidence are not crazy. They are patriots who dearly love America and are alarmed by what they have witnessed over the last four years: a thoroughly corrupt FBI investigation of a duly elected president; a grossly biased media that has chosen sides and uses its power to interfere in our politics to a far greater extent than any foreign entity could ever hope to achieve; an increasingly powerful social media that censors news and conservative voices; and courts and election officials that usurp the constitutional authority of state legislatures in setting the times, places, and manner of holding elections.

Prior to election day, these patriots were reminded of the Carter-Baker Commission's caution regarding absentee balloting: "Absentee ballots remain the largest source of potential voter fraud," and then they saw Covid being exploited to dramatically increase the use of absentee voting and extensive efforts to simultaneously weaken the controls governing it. They also hear that one of the social media moguls, Mark Zuckerberg, spent almost half a billion dollars to increase Democrat turnout in Democrat-controlled jurisdictions, and they wonder, "Is that even legal?"

Then on election day, they saw poll watchers being thrown out or obstructed from

observing. They heard reports of dead people voting, votes being cast by people who have moved out of state or reside at vacant addresses, people voting twice, once by absentee ballot and once in person, of large Democrat-controlled counties waiting until after Republican counties have reported and then dumping their vote totals in the wee hours of the morning, election officials and others refusing to turn over evidence to those investigating irregularities, and courts refusing to hear what evidence was obtained and instead dismissing election challenges on procedural grounds.

Is it any wonder that so many have lost confidence in the fairness of our election system and question the legitimacy of the result?

The first step in solving any problem is admitting you have one. My support for a bipartisan commission to address electoral concerns is meant to acknowledge the problem and highlight that having a large percentage of Americans questioning the legitimacy of our elections is a dangerous reality that must be addressed.

This is not a problem that can be swept under the rug with the hope it will somehow solve itself. I recognized this early and held a hearing in December, but was only able to scratch the surface of the issues involved. Unless the election irregularities are fully investigated and explanations provided, I fear this problem will fester within the body politic and could lead to even greater rancor and division.

While I am sympathetic and agree with many of the constitutional concerns raised by people on both sides of the political spectrum, I sincerely hope this debate will serve as a wake-up call to state legislatures to recognize the legitimacy of these concerns, fully investigate the irregularities in their states, reassert their authority over federal elections, and establish controls to restore confidence in our election system. The solution lies in the states, not with the federal government.

For the future unity of our nation, it is crucial that states properly shoulder their responsibility, take the action required, and alleviate any doubt that future elections will be fair and legitimate.