

# Bill Kaplan: Jan. 6, Wisconsin GOP wears stain of dishonor

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Wyoming GOP Rep. Liz Cheney, vice chair of the Jan. 6 House investigation, has challenged Republicans to face the truth about the 2020 presidential election and Jan. 6: “I say this to my Republican colleagues who are defending the indefensible – there will come a day when Donald Trump is gone, but your dishonor will remain.” Cheney has put country above party and will probably lose the GOP primary for her House seat. However, she has masterfully helped get to the bottom of the Jan. 6 armed assault on the Capitol.

Cheney is speaking to Wisconsin Republicans who have slithered away from reality and truth. This includes Senator Ron Johnson, Representatives Scott Fitzgerald and Tom Tiffany, gubernatorial candidates, legislative leaders and party apparatchiks. They lie or obfuscate about Biden’s winning the 2020 presidential election. All have embraced a delusional conspiracy that somehow Wisconsin Republicans won most congressional and state legislative races, but Trump was cheated out of winning Wisconsin.

Wisconsin GOP Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, anything but a leader, has tried to stay in Trump’s good graces. He shamefully appointed Michael Gableman, an ignorant zealot, to lead a so-called investigation into the 2020 election. About \$1 million of taxpayers’ money has been spent for hot air. After the Wisconsin Supreme Court wrongly banned absentee ballot drop boxes, Trump began pressuring Vos to illegally overturn Biden’s win in Wisconsin. He declined, but laughs off Trump’s continuing threats to democracy. Vos’ accommodation of Trump’s demands has diminished him and undermines democracy and truth in Wisconsin. Vos is facilitating an authoritarian movement in Wisconsin.

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Compare Vos to Arizona GOP House Speaker Rusty Bowers, who testified before the Jan. 6 House committee. Bowers said that Trump cajoled him to overturn Biden's win in Arizona. He told Trump: "You're asking me to do something against my oath, and I'm not going to break my oath." Bowers withstood vile defamation from Trump supporters and refused to buckle under to lies and threats. He later received the JFK Profile in Courage Award for his courageous efforts. However, Trump does not believe in oaths.

The last Jan. 6 committee hearing made that startlingly clear. As armed thugs assaulted the Capitol, attacking police, defiling offices and hunting for Vice President Pence and Democratic House Speaker Pelosi, Trump watched FOX News. For hours he did nothing to end the violence. Trump didn't activate the National Guard or federal law enforcement. Instead he tweeted encouragement to the rioters. And, he called GOP senators to pressure them not to certify the election results.

"Trump had the power to start what occurred on Jan. 6, and he had the power to stop it. Having exercised the former, he withheld the latter. This was indeed a violation of his oath of office - one that began the moment he realized he had lost the election, and one that continued until the disaster he invited had finally struck" (Washington Post).

No one is above the law. The U.S. Department of Justice must hold Trump accountable.

*- Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C., for the Wisconsin State Journal from 1995 - 2009.*