

Bill Kaplan: Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, January 6

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President Biden eloquently marked the first anniversary of the Trump incited January 6, 2021 assault on the U.S. Capitol. The rioters injured 140 police officers, including two who later died. And, the mob desecrated the Capitol, destroying or vandalizing historic, priceless artifacts. Over 725 have been charged, including 6 Wisconsinites. Many have pleaded guilty or been convicted.

Biden said: “For the first time in our history, a president had not just lost an election, he tried to prevent the peaceful transfer of power as a violent mob breached the Capitol. But they failed. ... And on this day of remembrance, we must make sure that such an attack never, never happens again.” Biden condemned the “defeated former president” for his “web of lies about the 2020 election.” Finally, Biden said: “He (Trump) can’t accept he lost, even though that’s what 93 United States senators, his own Attorney General, his own Vice President, governors and state officials ... have all said: He lost.”

Wisconsin Democratic Senator Tammy Baldwin spoke powerfully on the Senate floor: “Far too many would like to whitewash (that) violent day and pretend the insurrection was not an existential threat to our democracy.” She went on to condemn Wisconsin GOP Senator Ron Johnson’s willful blindness: “ (Johnson) even called January 6 a ‘peaceful protest’This is not right and we cannot allow the truth to be buried.” Missouri GOP Senator Roy Blunt also criticized Johnson’s delusion: “We all saw what happened.”

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Conservative mainstream business groups agreed. On January 6, 2021 the National Association of Manufacturers said: “Armed violent protestors who support the baseless claim by outgoing President Trump that he somehow won an election that he overwhelmingly lost have stormed the U.S. Capitol today, attacking police officers and first responders, because Trump refused to accept defeat in a free and fair election. ... This is not law and order. ... The outgoing president incited violence in an attempt to retain power This is not the vision of America that manufacturers believe in and work so hard to defend.”

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce concurred: “The attacks against our nation’s Capital Building and our democracy must end now. The Congress of the United States must gather again this evening to conclude their Constitutional responsibility to accept the report of the Electoral College.” And, the Business Roundtable issued a similar statement: “The chaos unfolding in the nation’s capital is the result of unlawful efforts to overturn the legitimate results of a democratic election.”

The above condemnations highlight the appalling extremism of Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) and its silence on the January 6 insurrection. Long after the election (on January 20, 2021), WMC briefly congratulated “Joe Biden and Kamala Harris on their inauguration” Outrageously, WMC is supporting Wisconsin 3rd congressional district GOP candidate Derrick Van Orden with a \$1,000 donation. Van Orden improperly used campaign funds attending the January 6th insurrection.

Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce continues to remain silent about the January 6, 2021 sedition.

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