

Letter To The Editor: Madison County Democrats call on Madison County Republicans to denounce Donald Trump's Role in Inciting Violence at the Capitol

by Randy Harris

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Madison County Democratic Party has called on Madison County Republican leaders to denounce Donald Trump's role in encouraging this week's violence at the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Republican leaders around the country have gone on record in opposition to what President Trump said and did to encourage Wednesday's coup attempt at the United States Capitol. Members of the President's Cabinet and high-level staff have resigned. Republican members of Congress have called on the President's Cabinet to invoke the 25th Amendment or for the President to resign immediately.

But local Republican leaders, who eagerly supported and voted for Donald Trump, have remained silent.

Five people are dead, including a Capitol Police officer, who was beaten with a fire extinguisher. This is not a time for silence. It is time for Kurt Prenzler, Thomas Haine, Amy Elik, Mike Bost, and all Republican elected officials in Madison County to go on the record specifically condemning Trump's role in attempting to overthrow the United States government. What we witnessed was not an act of patriotism, it was an act of treason.

Madison County Republicans have eagerly supported and encouraged Donald Trump for five years. Republicans around the country are coming to their senses about the damage he has caused, and it is long past the time for local Republican leaders to show the public whether they support the Constitution and our nation, or stand with an individual who encouraged armed insurrection against the United States.

More details will come out in the days and weeks to come but it is already indisputable that Donald Trump repeatedly and deliberately encouraged the violent overthrow of our government for weeks leading up to January 6. Even Republican Senator Roy Blunt has condemned Trump saying 'I think the president's decisions and his actions that day and leading up to that day on this topic were clearly reckless.'"

Donald Trump knew that extremists who supported him were interpreting his words to be a call for violence, yet he continued his rhetoric on January 6 at a rally dubbed the "Storm the Capitol Rally," on the National Mall, within sight of the U.S. Capitol, just before his supporters illegally stormed Capitol Hill, saying: "And we fight. We fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore," At the same rally, Donald Trump's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, said, "So let's have a trial by combat."

Not to be outdone, Donald Trump, Jr. stirred up the same crowd saying, "We're coming for you, and we're going to have a good time doing it!" Thousands clad in Trump and MAGA (Make American Great Again) gear then walked down the National Mall to the U.S. Capitol, overwhelmed Capitol Police officers, and took control of the Capitol, forcing Members of Congress, Republicans and Democrats, as well as Vice President Mike Pence, to flee. Trump, safely ensconced in the White House, then used a video on

Twitter to tell those rioting at the Capitol that “he loved them,” they were “very special”, and they were “patriots”.

Trump’s former Chiefs of Staff have called for him to resign, and all living Secretaries of Defense have condemned Trump’s words. Congressman Davis condemned the activity only in general, as did Rep. Amy Elik, but they have not addressed the one person who was responsible, President Trump because they don’t want to upset a small number of extremists. It’s time for all Madison County Republican elected leaders to speak truth to power and do the right thing.

Lastly, the local press has a duty to get local officials on the record about one of the most consequential events of our time. It’s time for all local media outlets to find out just where these local officials stand, do your job, you have a duty to the public.

- Randy Harris, Madison County Democratic Party Chair.