Statement on the Insurrection at the US Capitol

Yesterday, a mob incited by the President of the United States overran the US Capitol in a violent insurrection. Those who forcibly entered the Capitol building and its offices struck at the heart of democratic principles in the United States, disrupting lawmaking and the peaceful transition of power that has served as a centerpiece of American democracy. By interrupting a largely ceremonial action on the false promise of overturning the results of a free and fair election, this mob led to the needless death and injury of Americans and posed an imminent threat to US lawmakers, their staffs, and the staff of the US Capitol building.

We are shocked, dismayed and disgusted at the events on Capitol Hill. As scholars of government and politics, we condemn President Trump and legislators who have continuously endorsed and disseminated falsehoods and misinformation, and who have worked to overturn the results of the Presidential election. The President has sown doubt and mistrust in the democratic process and the electoral process in the United States. Democracy is resilient but it is also fragile, and it is undermined by the actions of those elected legislators who repeat and amplify specious claims of electoral fraud.

Now the hard work of rebuilding our institutions and our democratic norms must start. We applaud the work of the House and Senate in completing their constitutional duties to certify the election results. The efforts to begin reconciliation yesterday after order was restored are reflective of what public officials need to be doing to help rebuild confidence in our democratic institutions, including agreement by both sides to do better and work together to dismantle the systems and structures that lead to the harm. Political scientists stand ready to support the work of our elected officials to chart a path forward.

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