

**Address on the front steps of the Pennsylvania State Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA
September 25, 2024
By Douglas E. Wentz**

**Subject:
“Donald Trump’s January 6th Insurrection and Endless Corruption: Why
Don’t You Care?”**

Good morning and thank you for being here.

My name is Douglas Wentz.

Why I am here.

The subject of my speech today is “Donald Trump’s January 6th Insurrection and Endless Corruption: Why Don’t You Care?”

Having said that, I’d like to provide some further background.

On August 23-24, 1978, while a Mechanicsburg, PA resident and a 19-year old junior at Cornell University, I attempted a Guinness World Record for the longest continuous political speech and succeeded in speaking for 31 continuous hours right here on the front steps of the Pennsylvania capitol building with the topic: “Pennsylvania’s Corrupt State Government: Why Don’t You Care?” A registered Republican at the time, my speech included a list of 238 public officials who had been indicated or convicted of corruption-related charges during the preceding eight years. By 1978, for example, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) units in nine counties were under investigation, and 28 officials were convicted in a four-year period of making employees and extorting money from contractors. (1)

In the years that followed my speech, I was determined to do something about the problem of corruption in Pennsylvania. I completed my BA at Cornell, earned an MA in public policy analysis at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and a law degree at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. While in law school, I worked at the American Bar

Association's Model Procurement Code Project, which would enable states and cities to modernize and professionalize their procurement practices and minimize the opportunities for favoritism and corruption. I also drafted several chapters of the ABA's guide on "Identifying and Prosecuting Fraud and Abuse in State and Local Contracting." And finally, I promoted adoption of the ABA's Model Procurement Code and other anti-corruption measures in opinion pieces published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Harrisburg Patriot and Evening News*.

After completing my education, I pursued a career as a corporate and securities lawyer, initially with one of the oldest and largest law firms in Philadelphia and later with several Fortune 500 corporations headquartered in Florida, where among other things I assisted in developing ethics and compliance programs.

Now, at the age of 66 and a registered independent, I am recently retired and thought that my speaking days were long behind me.

Until now.

The Presidential election to be held on November 5, will likely be the most consequential election in my lifetime, and the candidates - Donald Trump and Kamala Harris - offer starkly different visions for America.

And for better or for worse, I've found that I cannot sit still.

The same love of democracy and passion for good government that drove me to speak for 31 hours against corruption in Pennsylvania in 1978 still resides within me 46 years later.

Much has been written and will continue to be said about the differences between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris on policy matters. They have very different views on border security and immigration policy, the economy, healthcare policy, foreign policy, climate change and environmental policy, and social justice and criminal justice reform.

But in my mind, any discussion of these policy differences is a deflection that misses what I feel is the central point of this election that cannot be overlooked, which is that:

Donald Trump is unfit to be President of the United States because:

- (1) he incited an attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021; and**
- (2) he was the most corrupt President in U.S. history.**

Full stop.

No discussion of policy differences is necessary. No person who has incited a violent insurrection against the U.S. government and inflicted a lifetime of corruption upon our land should ever be the President of the United States.

Period.

But before I address Donald Trump's insurrection and corruption in more detail, I want to cover a few preliminary matters.

Some words of thanks.

First, I would like to thank my friends Dave Redlawsk and Sue Winn Kitzaro. They both graduated with me from Mechanicsburg High School Class of 1976, and it's great to have them both here today. I might add that Dave was with me during my original speech back in 1978 as well. Life can take some unusual twists, and I don't think either of us ever thought we would find ourselves on the Capitol steps once again, but here we are. Dave is now the James R. Soles Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Delaware, and a widely recognized scholar of voter decision making and emotions in politics, and I really appreciate that he made the drive to be with us today.

I also want to thank the Capitol police, who helped make arrangements for my speech and are providing security. I'm sure they were relieved to learn that this time I won't be speaking for 31 hours, but alas, I'm not as young as I used to be!

I also want to thank my wife Lisa and daughter Kelly whose love and understanding have helped to make this event possible.

And finally, I want to thank all of you for being here today and for making the effort to consider what I have to say.

My Central Pennsylvania background.

I also want to acknowledge that I currently live near Orlando, FL, so you may be wondering why I still feel connected to Pennsylvania. In that regard, I already mentioned some of my Pennsylvania background, including my education at the University of Pennsylvania and work history in Philadelphia, but I want to add a few more things. I was born in the Harrisburg Polyclinic Hospital, which is located just 20 blocks north of where I'm standing right now. When I was six months old my parents moved from Adrian Street in Harrisburg to a new home in nearby Mechanicsburg. I lived in that same home until I graduated as valedictorian from Mechanicsburg High School in 1976, where my mother was a schoolteacher and chairwoman of the English department. My parents continued to live in that same house for another 36 years, a total of 53 years, and I visited them often. My parents were married in the Pine Street Presbyterian Church, which you can see from where I am standing right now; I was baptized in the Market Square Presbyterian Church a few blocks further down the street; and my grandparents are buried at the Silver Spring Presbyterian Church in Mechanicsburg. So suffice it to say that my roots in this area run deep. I was born and raised in Central Pennsylvania, my values were formed here, and I care deeply about the future of this Commonwealth.

I also realize, as I'm sure many of you do as well, that in the upcoming election, Pennsylvania is a critical swing state, and the result of the voting here could very well determine the outcome of the election as a whole. So for me, another flight home to share my thoughts was well worth the cost.

MakeModeratesMatter.com

And the last thing I'd like to say before I turn to Donald Trump is that for most of my life I was a registered Republican, and currently am registered independent. Donald Trump has a habit of accusing anyone who disagrees with him of being a "radical socialist Democrat," but in my case, nothing could be further from the truth. When I lived in Philadelphia, I was active in Republican politics and was an elected Republican committeeman. I campaigned for Republican U.S. Senator Arlen Specter, and for Ron Castille, a Republican who was elected District Attorney of Philadelphia and later became Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. I also had the good fortune to meet President George H. W. Bush, and here is a photo of myself with President Bush and his wife Barbara.

In the years that followed, I became increasingly disillusioned with the Republican Party and decided not to follow a career in politics. Eventually I changed my registration, but did not register as a Democrat and instead registered as an independent, which is where I stand today.

Politically, then, I consider myself to be a moderate, so much so that I am using this speech today to launch a new website – **MakeModeratesMatter.com**. I hope to use this venue not only to explore what it means to be a political "moderate" but also to consider what concrete steps can be taken to combat extremism and promote moderation in U.S. politics, such as Ranked Choice Voting and restrictions on gerrymandering. My hope is to provide a resource for political moderates, voters who seek common ground between opposing viewpoints and are willing to compromise to provide more productive governance. Extreme ideologies can lead to polarization and societal division, but my hope is that moderate politics can appeal to a broader spectrum of the population, reducing the likelihood of conflict and political instability. My website is a work in progress, and it likely will be some months before I'm able to develop it further, but that is my goal. In the meantime, you can use the website at MakeModeratesMatter.com to contact me and subscribe for further updates. I also will post the full text of my speech here today on the website for anyone who is interested.

Which brings us back to the first of the two points I would like to address today, namely, that:

(1) Donald Trump is unfit to be President of the United States because he incited an attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Now, for someone in my position, who would like to summarize what occurred on January 6th, the good news is that I don't have far to look.

The Final Report of the Select Committee to Investigate January 6th

Nothing I might write could possibly come as close to providing the actual facts, depth of analysis and insights regarding Donald Trump's role in the Capitol attack as what I am holding here in my hands: the **Final Report of the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol.** (2)

The Report signifies a watershed moment in American democracy. It encapsulates the events of January 6, 2021, and outlines how supporters of then-President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol, seeking to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

It is important to emphasize that the Report was a bi-partisan effort. The Committee included not only Democrats but also Republicans Liz Cheney of Wyoming and Adam Kinzinger of Illinois. In addition, the Committee's Report is based upon live testimony from several dozen witnesses, the vast majority of whom were Republicans. (3)

The Report is crucial in providing a comprehensive historical account of the events that transpired on January 6th. The importance of preserving this record cannot be overstated; it promotes an informed citizenry and mitigates against the erosion of truth that can result from a landscape that is rife with misinformation and revisionist history.

The Report also demonstrates, in my mind, in no uncertain terms, why Donald Trump is unfit to ever again be elected President of the United States, and, by extension, why Scott Perry should not be re-elected to Congress to represent Pennsylvania's 10th Congressional District that includes my former home in Mechanicsburg.

Now the Report is fairly long – it’s 814 pages including the Appendices. But not to worry, I don’t intend to read the whole thing!

I would, however, like to review some key points.

Chapter 1 of the Report is entitled “**The Big Lie**” and includes the following:

Late on election night 2020, President Donald J. Trump addressed the nation from the East Room of the White House. When Trump spoke, at 2:21 a.m. on November 4th, the President’s re-election was very much in doubt. (4)

...

“This is a fraud on the American public. This is an embarrassment to our country,” President Trump said. “We were getting ready to win this election,” the President continued. “Frankly, we did win this election.” (5)

...

Neither of Trump’s claims were true. He had no basis for claiming victory or that fraud was taking place. (6)

...

President Trump’s decision to declare victory falsely on election night and, unlawfully, to call for the vote count to stop, was not a spontaneous decision. It was premeditated.

...

The evidence ... includes an audio recording of President Trump’s advisor Steve Bannon, who said this on October 31, 2020, to a group of his associates from China:

“And what Trump’s going to do is just declare victory, right? He’s gonna declare victory. But that doesn’t mean he’s the winner. He’s just gonna say he’s the winner That’s our strategy.” (7)

Trump said:

“We’ve proven” the election was stolen, ... [but] that was false. (8)

... As longtime Republican election attorney Benjamin Ginsberg testified before the Select Committee, the President’s camp “did have their day in court,” it’s just that “in no instance did a court find that the charges of fraud were real.” In total, the Trump campaign and allies of President Trump filed 62 separate lawsuits between November 4, 2020, and January 6, 2021, calling into question or seeking to overturn the election results. Out of 62 cases, only one resulted in a victory for the President or his allies, which affected relatively few votes, did not vindicate any underlying claims of fraud, and would not have changed the outcome in Pennsylvania. (9)

Chapter 2 of the Report is entitled **“I just want to find 11,780 votes”**. It begins with the following:

In a now infamous telephone call on January 22, 2021, President Trump pressured Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger for more than an hour. The President confronted him with multiple conspiracy theories about the election – none of which were true. Raffensperger and other Georgia officials debunked these allegations, one after another, during their call. ... But, undeterred by the facts, the President badgered Raffensperger to overturn the Georgia results. (10)

President Trump insisted that “the ballots are corrupt” and someone was “shredding” them. He issued a thinly veiled threat, telling Raffensperger, “it is more illegal for you than it is for them because you know what they did and you’re not reporting it.” Of course, the Georgia officials weren’t doing anything “illegal,” and there was nothing to “report.” Even so, President Trump suggested that both Raffensperger and his general counsel, Ryan Germany, could face criminal jeopardy.

“That’s a criminal offense. And you can’t let that happen,” the President said. “That’s a big risk to you and to Ryan, your lawyer . . . I’m notifying you that you’re letting it happen.” (11)

And then the President made his demand. “So look. All I want to do is this. I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have,” President Trump told Raffensperger. (12)

It was a stunning moment. The President of the United States was asking a State’s chief election officer to “find” enough votes to declare him the winner of an election he lost.

Raffensperger saw the President’s warning to him on January 2nd as a threat. “I felt then—and I still believe today—that this was a threat,” Raffensperger wrote in his book. (13)

Chapter 3 of the Report covers the **fake electors’ plot**. It includes the following:

On the morning of January 6th, in his speech at the Ellipse, President Trump exhorted his thousands of assembled supporters to march to the U.S. Capitol, explaining that “[w]e have come to demand that Congress do the right thing and only count the electors who have been lawfully slated.” This was no off-the-cuff remark; it was the culmination of a carefully planned scheme many weeks in the making. (14)

.....

President Trump and his allies prepared their own fake slates of electoral college electors in seven States that President Trump lost: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. And on December 14, 2020—the date when true, certified electors were meeting to cast their electoral votes for the candidate who had won the popular vote in each of those States—these fake electors also met, ostensibly casting electoral votes for President Trump, the candidate who had lost. (15)

...

... President Trump’s plan was illegal. In his June 7, 2022, opinion, Federal District Judge David Carter wrote that this initiative to “certify alternate slates of electors for President Trump” constituted a “critical objective of the January 6 plan.” This followed Judge Carter’s earlier determination in March that “[t]he illegality of the plan was obvious,” and “[e]very American—and certainly the President of the United States—knows that in a democracy, leaders are elected, not installed. With a plan this ‘BOLD,’ President Trump knowingly tried to subvert this fundamental principle. Based on the evidence the Court finds it more likely than not that President Trump corruptly attempted to obstruct the Joint Session of Congress on January 6, 2021.” (16)

Chapter 4 of the Report is entitled “**Just call it corrupt and leave the rest to me.**” It was a particularly painful chapter for me to read, because unfortunately it includes quite a few references to Scott Perry, the Republican congressman for the 10th Congressional District that includes both Harrisburg and my former home in Mechanicsburg. In fact, by my count, Scott Perry is named a total of at least 84 times in both the text and footnotes of the Report. It’s an appalling legacy.

The chapter begins by reviewing Attorney General Bill Barr’s various meetings with President Trump in which he emphasized to the President that there was no credible evidence of significant election fraud:

Barr explained to the President why he was wrong. DOJ was willing to investigate any “specific and credible allegations of fraud.” The fact of the matter was that the claims being made were “just not meritorious” and were “not panning out.” ... (17)

....

Attorney General Barr then decided to speak out. He invited Michael Balsamo, an Associated Press (AP) reporter, to lunch on December 1st. Barr told the journalist that “to date, we have not seen fraud on a scale that could have effected a different outcome in the election.” (18)

That made the President irate.

Later that evening, Attorney General Barr met with President Trump at the White House. (19)

...

President Trump peppered him with unsupported conspiracy theories. ... Attorney General Barr was familiar with the conspiracy theories raised by the President. The “big ones” he investigated included claims such as: Dominion voting machines switched votes, votes had been “dumped at the end of the night” in Milwaukee and Detroit, non-residents voted in Nevada, the number of ballots counted in Pennsylvania exceeded the number of votes cast, as well as a story about a truck driver supposedly driving thousands of pre-filled ballots from New York to Pennsylvania, among others. ... there was no truth to any of these allegations, but that didn’t stop President Trump from repeatedly citing these fictional accounts. (20)

...

Finally, Attorney General Barr had had enough. He submitted his resignation on December 14, 2020. ... (21)

Barr testified in an interview with the Select Committee that:

... I made clear I did not agree with the idea of saying the election was stolen and putting out this stuff which I told the President was bullshit. And, you know, I didn’t want to be part of it. ... (22)

In the wake of Barr’s departure, Jeffrey Rosen became acting attorney general. And unfortunately, that’s when Representative Scott Perry from Pennsylvania’s 10th Congressional District enters the picture. The Report continues:

On December 27, 2020, President Trump called Acting Attorney General Rosen once again. ... According to Donoghue’s contemporaneous notes, Trump referenced three Republican politicians, all of whom had supported the President’s election lies and the “Stop the Steal”

campaign. One was Representative Scott Perry. Another was Doug Mastriano, a State senator from Pennsylvania who would later be on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol during the January 6th attack. President Trump also referenced Representative Jim Jordan from Ohio, praising him as a “fighter.” Representatives Perry and Jordan had often teamed up to spread lies about the election. The two spoke at a “Stop the Steal” rally in front of the Pennsylvania State capitol in Harrisburg, just days after the November election. (23)

That would be about where we are standing right now! The Report continues:

... Representative Perry was one of President Trump’s key congressional allies in the effort to overturn the election’s results. Representative Perry was an early supporter of the “Stop the Steal” campaign Representative Perry was also one of 27 Republican Congressmen who signed a letter requesting that President Trump “direct Attorney General Barr to appoint a Special Counsel to investigate irregularities in the 2020 election.” The letter was dated December 9, 2020—more than 1 week after Barr told the press there was no evidence of significant fraud. ... (24)

The Report continues:

On the evening of December 27th, Representative Perry emailed Donoghue a set of documents alleging significant voting fraud had occurred in Pennsylvania. One document asserted that election authorities had counted 205,000 more votes than had been cast. Representative Perry also shared this same claim on Twitter the following day. President Trump kept raising the same claim. ... [but] ... it was not true. (25)

Acting Deputy Attorney General Donoghue forwarded Representative Perry’s email to Scott Brady, who was the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania at the time. As Brady soon discovered, there was no discrepancy. President Trump’s supporters came up with the claim by comparing the Pennsylvania Secretary of State’s website, which reported the total number of votes as 5.25 million, to a separate

State election registry, which showed only 5 million votes cast. The problem was simple: Pennsylvania's election site had not been updated. The totals for four counties had not yet been reported on the election site. Once those votes were counted on the site, the totals matched. This was simply not an example of fraud, as President Trump, Representative Perry and others would have it. (26)

Despite all this, Trump continued to assert his false claims that the election had been stolen, and was relying on his followers in Congress, including Representative Perry, to do the same. The Report continues:

... Donoghue recorded in handwritten notes a request President Trump made specifically to him and Acting Attorney General Rosen: "Just say the election was corrupt and leave the rest to me and the Republican Congressmen." Donoghue explained: ... "he wanted us to say that it was corrupt." "We told him we were not going to do that." At the time, neither Rosen nor Donoghue knew the full extent to which Republican Congressmen, including Representative Scott Perry, were attempting to assist President Trump to overturn the election results. (27)

The Report goes on to note that the Select Committee had evidence from several witnesses that Perry had "an important role" in efforts to install Assistant Attorney General Jeffrey Clarke, an environmental lawyer supportive of Trump, as acting attorney general. There also was testimony that Perry even sought a Presidential pardon after his plans went awry:

The Committee notes that multiple Republican Members of Congress, including Representative Scott Perry, likely have material facts regarding President Trump's plans to overturn the election. (28) ... [and]

... After January 6th, Representative Perry reached out to White House staff asking to receive a Presidential pardon. (29)

As a result of Scott Perry's involvement in the efforts to overturn the election results, the Committee subpoenaed Perry in May 2022, the first time it

publicly sought to question a sitting member of Congress, but Perry refused to appear. (30)

I will have more to say about Scott Perry a bit later in my talk.

Chapter 5 of the Report is entitled “**A coup in search of a legal theory.**” The Report notes that on January 4, 2021, President Trump summoned Vice President Pence to a meeting in the Oval Office where the President and lawyer John Eastman pressured Pence to reject the certified electors from several states or delay the joint session of Congress. The Report notes that:

Vice President Pence rejected President Trump’s demands “many times” on January 4th and in the days that followed. Vice President Pence correctly pointed out that he had no power to take any action other than counting the certified electoral votes. ... However, instead of backing down, President Trump ratcheted up the pressure even further, relentlessly harassing Vice President Pence both in public and in private. (31)

...

During his speech at the Ellipse on January 6th, President Trump repeatedly pointed his finger at Vice President Pence. President Trump insisted that “if Mike Pence does the right thing, we win the election.” ... (32)

...

President Trump then sent a mob to the U.S. Capitol. He did so even after being informed by the Secret Service that people in the crowd possessed weapons. He wanted his supporters to intimidate Vice President Pence and any other Republican who refused his demands. The President told the crowd assembled before him to march down Pennsylvania Avenue, to “our Republicans, the weak ones” at the U.S. Capitol, “to try and give them the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country.” (33)

The mob overran the U.S. Capitol in short order. At 2:24 p.m., while the attack was well underway, President Trump tweeted:

Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution... ! (34)

Again, the opposite was true. Vice President Pence showed courage on January 6th. The Vice President refused to be intimidated by President Trump's mob, even as chants of "Hang Mike Pence!" echoed throughout the halls of the U.S. Capitol and a makeshift gallows was constructed on the Capitol grounds. (35)

It is no mystery why the mob turned on Vice President Pence. President Trump told his supporters that the election was stolen, and that Vice President Pence had the power, but lacked the courage, to fix it. None of this was true. (36)

...

In early 2022, U.S. District Judge David Carter evaluated the Trump-Eastman scheme to pressure the Vice President. Judge Carter described it as "a campaign to overturn a democratic election, an action unprecedented in American history." It was "a coup in search of a legal theory," Judge Carter found, that likely violated at least two Federal laws. The Trump-Eastman scheme was not a feature of the U.S. Constitution, as President Trump told his supporters. Instead, it "would have permanently ended the peaceful transition of power, undermining American democracy and the Constitution." (37)

And it all began because President Trump refused to accept the result of the election, expressed through the votes of 81 million Americans. (38)

Chapter 6 of the Report is entitled: "**Be there will be wild!**" It begins as follows:

On December 14, 2020, electors around the country met to cast their Electoral College votes. Their vote ensured former Vice President Joe Biden's victory and cemented President Donald J. Trump's defeat. The people, and the States, had spoken. Members of President Trump's own Cabinet knew the election was over. Attorney General William Barr viewed it as "the end of the matter." Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia concurred. That same day, Scalia told President Trump directly that he should concede defeat. (39)

President Trump had no intention of conceding. As he plotted ways to stay in power, the President summoned a mob for help. (40)

At 1:42 a.m., on December 19th, President Trump tweeted: "Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!" (41)

The President's tweet galvanized tens of thousands of his supporters around the country. President Trump had been lying to them since election day, claiming he won, and that the Democrats had stolen victory from him. Now, with a single tweet, the President focused his supporters' anger on the joint session of Congress in Washington, DC on January 6th. (42)

Chapter 7 of the Report is entitled "**187 minutes of dereliction.**" In my mind, it is the most chilling chapter of the Report. As the whole country, indeed the world, witnessed the attack on the Capitol unfold on live television, Donald Trump didn't tell the rioters to disperse for over three hours. It was a disgraceful dereliction of duty and assault on the very foundation of American democracy.

The Report notes that:

At 1:10 p.m. on January 6th, President Trump concluded his speech at the Ellipse. By that time, the attack on the U.S. Capitol had already begun. But it was about to get much worse. The President told thousands of people in attendance to march down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol. He told them to "fight like hell" because if they didn't, they were "not going to have a country anymore." ... (43)

By 1:21 p.m., President Trump was informed that the Capitol was under attack. He could have interceded immediately. But the President chose not to do so. It was not until 4:17 p.m. that President Trump finally tweeted a video in which he told the rioters to go home. (44)

The 187 minutes between the end of President Trump’s speech and when he finally told the mob to leave the U.S. Capitol was a dereliction of duty. ... He willfully remained idle even as others, including his own Vice President, acted. (45)

President Trump could have called top officials ... to ensure that they quelled the violence. He made no such calls. Instead, President Trump reached out to Rudolph Giuliani and friendly Members of Congress, seeking their assistance in delaying the joint session of Congress. And the President tweeted at 2:24 p.m., at the height of the violence, that his own Vice President lacked the “courage” to act—a statement that could only further enrage the mob. ... (46)

In testimony before the Select Committee, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley explained that President Trump did “[n]othing,” “[z]ero” to marshal the Government’s resources during the assault on the U.S. Capitol. ... (47)

President Trump’s closest advisors—both inside and out of the White House—implored him to act sooner. Earlier in the week, two of the President’s most trusted aides, Eric Herschmann and Hope Hicks, both wanted President Trump to emphasize that January 6th would be a peaceful protest. President Trump refused. (48)

Once the attack was underway, President Trump initially ignored the counsel of his own family, members of his administration, Republican elected officials, and friendly Fox News personalities. Both Ivanka Trump and Donald Trump, Jr. wanted their father to tell the rioters to go home sooner. The President delayed. At 2:38 p.m., President Trump sent this tweet: “Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement. They are truly on the side of our Country. Stay

peaceful!” Sarah Matthews, the White House Deputy Press Secretary, told the Select Committee that President Trump resisted using the word “peaceful.” The President added the words “Stay peaceful!” only after Ivanka Trump suggested the phrase. Trump, Jr. quickly recognized that his father’s tweet was insufficient. “He’s got to condemn [sic] this shit. Asap. The Capitol [sic] police tweet is not enough,” Trump, Jr. wrote in a text (49)

Finally, at 4:17 p.m., Trump issued his video telling the rioters to disperse, but as the Report notes:

Even then, President Trump did not disavow the rioters. He endorsed their cause, openly sympathized with them, and repeated his Big Lie once again. “I know your pain, I know you’re hurt. We had an election that was stolen from us,” President Trump said at the beginning of his 4:17 p.m. video. “It was a landslide election, and everyone knows it, especially the other side. But you have to go home now. We have to have peace. We have to have law and order. ... We don’t want anybody hurt.” ... “This was a fraudulent election, but we can’t play into the hands of these people.” (50)

The President concluded his short video by again praising the men and women who had overrun the U.S. Capitol. “We have to have peace. So go home. We love you. You’re very special,” President Trump said. ... (51)

Chapter 8 of the Report provides an **“Analysis of the attack”** on the Capitol. It notes how the mob assembled in Washington and describes the role played by the “Proud Boys,” an exclusively male, far-right, neo-fascist militant organization that promotes and engages in political violence. The Report notes that:

President Trump finished his speech at the Ellipse at approximately 1:10 p.m. Toward the end of his remarks, the President directed his supporters to march down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol. Their natural path took them through the Peace Circle, which had already been cleared out by the Proud Boys and their associates.

Thousands of rioters and protestors streamed onto the Capitol's restricted grounds in short order. (52)

...

The Proud Boys were not solely responsible for attacking the U.S. Capitol. ... other far-right extremists and conspiracy theorists prepared for violence after President Trump summoned them to Washington for a “wild” protest on January 6th. And they joined in the assault as well. Three Percenters, QAnon adherents, and other radicals were on the frontlines, pressing the charge. The Oath Keepers attacked the Capitol, forming two military-style “stacks” to push their way into the building. ... (53)

Unaffiliated Americans enraged by President Trump's lies rioted as well. The January 6th, attack has often been described as a riot—and that is partly true. Some of those who trespassed on the Capitol's grounds or entered the building did not plan to do so beforehand. But it is also true that extremists, conspiracy theorists and others were prepared to fight. That is an insurrection. They answered President Trump's call to action. ... (54)

...

More than 140 Capitol and Metropolitan police were injured, some very seriously. A perimeter security line of Metropolitan Police intended to secure the Capitol against intrusion broke in the face of thousands of armed rioters—more than 2,000 of whom gained access to the interior of the Capitol building. A woman who attempted to forcibly enter the Chamber of the House of Representatives through a broken window while the House was in session was shot and killed by police guarding the chamber. Vice President Pence and his family were at risk, as were those Secret Service professionals protecting him. ... Congressional proceedings were halted, and legislators were rushed to secure locations. (55)

...

There were an estimated 250 injured law enforcement officers from numerous agencies. One hundred-fourteen [United States Capitol Police] USCP officers reported injuries. Five police officers who were at the Capitol on January 6th died in the days following the riot. (56)

The conclusion of the Report provides Recommendations. It emphasizes the need for accountability, and notes that the Select Committee made criminal referrals so the Department of Justice and other authorities could determine whether to prosecute the individuals involved in the attack on the Capitol, including President Trump. (57)

So that concludes my reading of excerpts from the Report. It's a chilling experience to read the whole thing, which I encourage you to do. It's available free online.

Now as we just heard, the **Report emphasizes the need for accountability.**

In that regard, attempts to hold Donald Trump accountable began almost immediately after the attack on the Capitol when the joint session of Congress convened to certify the election results.

Senator Romney remarks.

With tears in his eyes, Senator Mitt Romney delivered an impassioned speech, portions of which are as follows:

Today was heartbreaking, and I was shaken to the core as I thought about the people I'd met in China and Russia and Afghanistan and Iraq and other places who yearn for freedom and who look to this building and these shores as a place of hope. And I saw the images being broadcast around the world and it breaks my heart. ...

Now we gather due to a selfish man's injured pride and the outrage of his supporters whom he has deliberately misinformed for the past two months and stirred to action this very morning. What happened here

today was an insurrection, incited by the President of the United States.

...

... For any who remain insistent on an audit in order to satisfy the many people who believe that the election was stolen, I offer this perspective. No Congressional audit is ever going to convince these voters, particularly when the President will continue to say that the election was stolen. The best way we can show respect for the voters who are upset is by telling them the truth! That's the burden, that's the duty, of leadership. The truth is that President-elect Biden won the election. President Trump lost. ... Scores of courts, the President's own Attorney General, state election officials both Republican and Democrat have reached that unequivocal decision.

...

Leader McConnell said that the vote today is the most important in his 36 years of public service. Think of that. Authorizing two wars. Voting on two impeachments. He said that not because the vote reveals something about the election; it's because this vote reveals something about us. I urge my colleagues to move forward with completing the electoral count, to refrain from further objections, and to unanimously affirm the legitimacy of the presidential election. (58)

...

Again, those were the words of Mitt Romney, the Republican Party's nominee for president of the United States in the 2012 election.

Resignations of Trump officials.

Shortly after the attack on the Capitol a variety of Trump administration officials also promptly resigned in protest. They include Betsy DeVos, Education Secretary, who wrote in a letter to Trump that:

"We are left to clean up the mess caused by violent protestors overrunning the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to undermine the people's

business. That behavior was unconscionable for our country. There is no mistaking the impact your rhetoric had on the situation, and it is the inflection point for me.” (59)

Others who resigned include:

Elaine Chao, Transportation Secretary;
Chad Wolf, acting secretary of Homeland Security;
Mick Mulvaney, former acting White House chief of staff;
Matthew Pottinger, the deputy national security adviser;
Tyler Goodspeed, the acting chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers;
Stephanie Grisham, chief of staff and press secretary to first lady Melania Trump; and
Sarah Matthews, White House deputy press secretary. (60)

Trump impeached for January 6 attack.

Donald Trump then was impeached for the second time on January 13, 2021, for his role in the attack on the Capitol, one week before his term expired. It was the fourth impeachment of a U.S. President and the second for Trump after his first impeachment in the Russia investigation in December 2019. The House of Representatives adopted one article of impeachment against Trump for “incitement of insurrection.” Trump became the first President to be impeached twice. (61)

After being impeached in the House, the impeachment trial in the Senate began on January 25. Many Republican Senators challenged the validity of the trial because by then the president was no longer in office. At the trial, 57 senators voted “guilty”, which was less than the two-thirds majority of 67 needed to convict Trump, and 43 senators, all Republican, voted “not guilty,” so Trump was acquitted of the charges. Nevertheless, seven Republican senators joined the entire Democratic caucus in voting for conviction, including Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, which was the most bipartisan presidential impeachment vote in the Senate to date. (62)

Remarks of Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell.

Significantly, too, while Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell voted to acquit Trump, he did so on the technical ground that Trump was no longer President. In so holding, however, McConnell stated that Trump could nevertheless be held accountable in a court of law, noting that:

“We have a criminal justice system in this country. We have civil litigation. And former Presidents are not immune from being held accountable by either one.” (63)

McConnell also made clear that in his view responsibility for the attack on the Capitol on January 6 rested squarely at the feet of Donald Trump. He noted the following in his speech on the floor of the Senate:

“January 6th was a disgrace.

American citizens attacked their own government. They used terrorism to try to stop a specific piece of democratic business they did not like.

Fellow Americans beat and bloodied our own police. They stormed the Senate floor. They tried to hunt down the Speaker of the House. They built a gallows and chanted about murdering the Vice President.

They did this because they had been fed wild falsehoods by the most powerful man on Earth — because he was angry he’d lost an election.

Former President Trump’s actions preceding the riot were a disgraceful dereliction of duty.

...

There is no question that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of that day.

The people who stormed this building believed they were acting on the wishes and instructions of their President.

And their having that belief was a foreseeable consequence of the growing crescendo of false statements, conspiracy theories, and

reckless hyperbole which the defeated President kept shouting into the largest megaphone on planet Earth.

The issue is not only the President's intemperate language on January 6th.

It is not just his endorsement of remarks in which an associate urged 'trial by combat.'

It was also the entire manufactured atmosphere of looming catastrophe; the increasingly wild myths about a reverse landslide election that was being stolen in some secret coup by our now-President.

I defended the President's right to bring any complaints to our legal system. The legal system spoke. The Electoral College spoke. As I stood up and said clearly at the time, the election was settled.

But that reality just opened a new chapter of even wilder and more unfounded claims.

The leader of the free world cannot spend weeks thundering that shadowy forces are stealing our country and then feign surprise when people believe him and do reckless things.

Sadly, many politicians sometimes make overheated comments or use metaphors that unhinged listeners might take literally.

This was different.

This was an intensifying crescendo of conspiracy theories, orchestrated by an outgoing president who seemed determined to either overturn the voters' decision or else torch our institutions on the way out.

The unconscionable behavior did not end when the violence began.

Whatever our ex-President claims he thought might happen that day... whatever reaction he says he meant to produce... by that afternoon, he was watching the same live television as the rest of the world.

A mob was assaulting the Capitol in his name. These criminals were carrying his banners, hanging his flags, and screaming their loyalty to him.

It was obvious that only President Trump could end this.

Former aides publicly begged him to do so. Loyal allies frantically called the Administration.

But the President did not act swiftly. He did not do his job. He didn't take steps so federal law could be faithfully executed, and order restored.

Instead, according to public reports, he watched television happily as the chaos unfolded. He kept pressing his scheme to overturn the election!

Even after it was clear to any reasonable observer that Vice President Pence was in danger... even as the mob carrying Trump banners was beating cops and breaching perimeters... the President sent a further tweet attacking his Vice President.

Predictably and foreseeably under the circumstances, members of the mob seemed to interpret this as further inspiration to lawlessness and violence.

Later, even when the President did halfheartedly begin calling for peace, he did not call right away for the riot to end. He did not tell the mob to depart until even later.

And even then, with police officers bleeding and broken glass covering Capitol floors, he kept repeating election lies and praising the criminals.

In recent weeks, our ex-President's associates have tried to use the 74 million Americans who voted to re-elect him as a kind of human shield against criticism.

Anyone who decries his awful behavior is accused of insulting millions of voters.

That is an absurd deflection.

74 million Americans did not invade the Capitol. Several hundred rioters did.

And 74 million Americans did not engineer the campaign of disinformation and rage that provoked it.

One person did.

I have made my view of this episode very plain.” (64)

Again, those were the words of Mitch McConnell, a Republican, of Trump’s own political party, speaking on the Senate floor, and not the words of some “radical socialist Democrat” as Trump likes to call anyone who opposes him.

Prosecution of January 6 rioters.

Since Trump’s acquittal in the Senate, more than 1,000 Americans have been convicted of Federal crimes as a result of their participation in the January 6th attack on the Capitol, and about 500 have been sentenced to prison terms. The charges include not only disorderly conduct and unlawful entry but also assault on law enforcement officers, trespassing, disrupting Congress, theft or other property crimes, weapons offenses, making threats, and conspiracy. (65) In addition, six people were convicted of seditious conspiracy: four members of the Proud Boys group were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 27 to 33 years, and two members of the Oath Keepers were sentenced to terms ranging from 12 to 18 years. (66)

Sadly, several of the convicted rioters are from my hometown of Mechanicsburg.

In particular, Riley June Williams, who was linked to a far-right extremist movement, was sentenced in March 2023, to three years in prison for storming the U.S. Capitol, where she invaded then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s office with other rioters. A District of Columbia jury found Williams guilty of six offenses related to her role as an “accelerant” in the Jan. 6 riots, barking commands, encouraging others to resist Capitol Police’s attempts to secure the building, and even encouraging someone to steal Nancy Pelosi’s laptop. In March 2024, Federal District Judge Amy Berman

Jackson denied the 25-year-old Mechanicsburg woman's attempt to reduce her sentence after considering arguments from federal prosecutors. (67)

Trump threatens to pardon the rioters.

Despite all these convictions, Trump has continued to say he will pardon the rioters (68), has begun referring to them as “hostages” (69) and has characterized the January 6 attack as “peaceful.” Speaking at one rally he said the following:

“As everyone knows it will be my great honor to pardon the peaceful January 6 protesters or as I often call them, the hostages. They’re hostages. There has never been a group of people treated so harshly or unfairly in our country’s history. This abuse will be rectified and it will be rectified very quickly.” (70)

Picking up on Trump's characterization of the January 6 attack as “peaceful,” some Republicans have even gone so far as to reframe January 6 as a “normal tourist visit” or “sightseeing tour.” (71)

More recently, and after criticism even from some Republicans about this revisionist history, Trump has hedged somewhat about pardons, saying that “If they're innocent, I would pardon them.” When asked exactly what that meant, and how convicted felons could be innocent, Trump added that they were “convicted by a very, very tough system” — as if that somehow left open the possibility that the violent rioters might still be innocent and deserving of presidential pardons. (72)

And finally, Trump kicked off the first rally of his 2024 presidential campaign by playing a song “Justice for all” that was recorded by the “J6 Prison Choir” consisting of inmates at the D.C. jail that were serving time for their role in the January 6 attack. The Washington Post later identified five of the roughly 15 men who are featured in a video recording of the song. Four of them were charged with assaulting police, using weapons such as a crowbar, sticks and chemical spray, including against Officer Brian D. Sicknick, who died the next day. (73)

Not everyone, however, is singing Donald Trump's song, and some of the convicted rioters lay responsibility for the violence squarely at Donald Trump's feet. One such Jan 6 rioter is Pam Hemphill, a 70-year-old from Boise, Idaho, who was sentenced to 60 days in jail. She was asked what she thought of Trump's lawyers' arguments that the attack was not an insurrection, and even if it was, that Trump was not responsible. She responded that:

“That’s what they’ve got going right now is a huge gaslighting, smear campaign going on. Telling me that it was a peaceful protest. I was there. I was there when they pushed those gates and those officers. And when they stepped on my head, and it was an officer that saved my life that day. ... He asked us all to go down there to that Capitol. Why? You know, he already had his speech, why did he want us to go down there? I’ll tell you why. Because he had a plan ... Trump knew exactly what was happening that day. And he sent us down there. It was a trap. ... The election was not stolen, they will not let go of that one. And we know that’s a lie. ... That’s why I speak out. Because I have all the receipts. I was there. I know what happened that day. And I hold Trump totally responsible.” (74)

Ultimately, however, while hundreds of people who stormed the Capitol on January 6 have been sentenced for their actions, and some like Pam Hemphill have accepted responsibility and expressed remorse for their conduct, the person most responsible for the attack on the Capitol, Donald Trump, has not, although efforts to hold him accountable are ongoing.

14th Amendment Cases

A case was filed in Colorado by the government watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) which argued that Donald Trump is ineligible to run for President because of a clause in the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, which provides that those who take an oath to defend the Constitution and then have “engaged in an insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof” are ineligible to serve. In November 2023, a Colorado judge ruled that Trump did

indeed engage in an “insurrection” but found that it was unclear whether the Presidency was one of the offices to which the amendment applied. (75)

The Colorado Supreme Court later reversed this decision and found that the Presidency was indeed covered by the amendment so that Trump was ineligible for the White House under the insurrection clause. (76)

In Maine, the Secretary of State made a similar finding, barring Trump from the ballot because he had engaged in insurrection. (77)

Eventually, the U.S. Supreme Court restored Trump to the ballot in both Colorado and Maine when it ruled that the state lacked authority to disqualify him. The Court held that the Constitution makes Congress, rather than the States, responsible for enforcing the insurrection clause. (78)

Nevertheless, it remains significant that both a trial judge in Colorado and the Maine Secretary of State found that Trump had engaged in insurrection.

DOJ January 6 Case

In November 2022, Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed Jack Smith to lead a special counsel investigation into attempts to overturn the election. In August 2023, a grand jury in D.C. indicted Trump on four charges for his conduct involving the January 6 Capitol attack, including conspiracy to defraud the United States and obstructing and conspiring to obstruct an official proceeding. The criminal charge with the longest sentence carries a maximum of 20 years in prison. The indictment also mentioned six unnamed co-conspirators. This was the first indictment against a U.S. president concerning actions while in office. (79)

In February 2024, District Judge Tanya Chutkan said she would not schedule a trial until the DC Circuit Court of Appeals decided whether Trump was immune from prosecution. The Court of Appeals unanimously ruled that Trump was not immune, but the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the long-held view that “no man is above the law.” Instead, the Supreme Court ruled on July 1 that former presidents have “some immunity from criminal prosecution” for their “official acts” made during their presidency. In her

dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor called the decision, which likely ended the prospect of a trial for Trump before the November election, “utterly indefensible” and “upsetting the status quo that has existed since the founding.” (80) The case now has been remanded to the D.C. District Court for further proceedings to determine whether the acts Trump is accused of are “official” or not. The DOJ’s opening brief to present their arguments is due tomorrow, September 26. The DOJ indicated in court that their filing would contain new information not included in the indictment. (81)

Donald Trump must be brought to trial and the evidence presented for everyone to see. Indeed, in August 2023, nearly a dozen former judges and federal legal officials, all appointed by Republicans, stated that:

"There is no more important issue facing America and the American people ... than whether the former president is guilty of criminally undermining America's elections and American democracy in order to remain in power. ... For the first time in American history, a former President of the United States stands charged with grave crimes against the United States of America that he allegedly committed while President. The serious offenses alleged ... constitute a knife to the heart of America's democracy and its democratic system of government and governance...." (82)

Georgia election interference case.

Trump also was indicted in Georgia in August 2023, along with 18 other defendants including former White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and attorneys Rudy Giuliani and John Eastman. This case centers around allegations that Trump and his associates attempted to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election in Georgia. The investigation, led by Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis, focused on Trump's efforts to pressure state officials to change the election outcome, including a well-documented phone call to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger mentioned earlier where Trump urged him to "find" enough votes to win. (83)

Four defendants have plead guilty to some charges, agreed to cooperate with the prosecution, and received sentences including probation, fines, and

making public apologies. One defendant who plead guilty, Trump attorney Jenna Ellis, read a tearful apology in court, saying among other things that:

I believe in and value election integrity. If I knew then what I know now, I would have declined to represent Donald Trump in these post-election challenges. I look back on this whole experience with deep remorse.
(84)

The trial date for the remaining fifteen defendants is not yet set. In January 2024, the attorney for one of the defendants filed a motion alleging that DA Willis and Special Prosecutor Nathan Wade had a romantic relationship. Wade resigned but the decision not to disqualify Willis was appealed to the Georgia Court of Appeals which has scheduled oral arguments for December 5, 2024, pushing the case past the November election. (85)

Throughout this time, Donald Trump has never presented evidence of voter fraud that could change the outcome of the election or clearly explained to the American people why he failed to stop the attack on the Capitol once it started. Instead, he has labeled attempts to hold him accountable for the January 6 attack a “politically motivated witch hunt.” (86)

Republicans supporting Trump’s indictments.

But many Republicans disagree.

Trump’s own Vice President Mike Pence strongly condemned Trump, stating that: “Today’s indictment serves as an important reminder: anyone who puts himself over the Constitution should never be president of the United States”. (87)

Former New Jersey Republican Governor Chris Christie said: “The events around the White House from election night forward are a stain on our country’s history and a disgrace to the people who participated. This disgrace falls the most on Donald Trump. He swore an oath to the Constitution, violated his oath and brought shame to his presidency.” (88)

And former Arkansas Republican Governor Asa Hutchinson said that: "Trump has disqualified himself from ever holding our nation's highest office again."
(89)

***Trump admits he lost the 2020 election, angering his supporters,
then reverses course once again.***

Strikingly, and most recently, Trump appeared to finally have admitted that he lost the 2020 election, which in turn angered his supporters, especially those who participated in the January 6 insurrection. Just three weeks ago, on September 5, 2024, USA Today reported that three times in recent weeks Trump acknowledged that he lost the election in 2020 "by a whisker," apparently changing his story in an attempt to appeal to moderate voters in key swing states. (90) This in turn angered his supporters, including white nationalist Nick Fuentes, who now is disavowing Trump. As Fuentes complained on his podcast:

He's admitting, he says "oh I lost by a whisker." So what was the point? Like what's the point of any of this? You lost in 2020. Seriously? Then what are we even doing anymore? Then you're a loser. Then you lost to Joe Biden. You deserve to be charged. If he admits that he lost, then that actually vindicates the [DOJ] charge against him. Because the charge is that he knew he lost, and he lied to defraud the people.... So why did we do Stop the Steal? Why did anyone go to January 6? Why is anyone sitting in jail? Why did anything bad happen to anybody? ... why did that need to happen if you're going to just walk it all back and say "oh, I lost." Well, it would have been good to know that before 1,600 people got charged. ... It would have been good to know that before I ... dedicated my life to this ... It just feels like a big rip-off! ... (91)

Wow. Some really excellent points there.

But of course, faced with this backlash, Trump now has reversed course once again. When asked about his admission that he "lost by a whisker" during his debate with Kamala Harris on September 10th, Trump now says he was being sarcastic, (92) this despite the fact that he repeated his "whisker" comment

multiple times without a hint of sarcasm in his voice, which led even his most ardent supporters like Nick Fuentes to believe he admitted he had lost.

Ultimately the people must hold Trump accountable.

But despite the growing outrage at Trump's behavior even among his most ardent supporters, it now is clear that neither the January 6 case nor the Georgia election interference case against Trump will go to trial before the election on November 5.

So ultimately, we are left with one inescapable truth. It will be up to the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to hold Donald Trump accountable when they go to the polls on November 5th. **The people must reject Donald Trump, vote for Kamla Harris for President, and allow Jack Smith and the rest of his team to continue their efforts to hold Donald Trump accountable for his crimes on January 6.**

Trump and Perry are not patriots, but my grandmother Gladys Bonebrake was.

And as for Representative Scott Perry, I have the following to add.

Scott Perry's website for his campaign to be re-elected to Congress in Pennsylvania's 10th district is PatriotsForPerry.com, but his conduct together with Donald Trump in the attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6 was hardly patriotic. Their efforts to overturn the 2020 election were a betrayal of democratic principles and helped to severely damage the public's trust in the electoral system. Their promotion of conspiracy theories eroded public trust in democratic institutions and helped to destabilize the country. They misused their positions to promote misinformation and divisive rhetoric, rather than focusing on unifying issues that strengthen the country as a whole. And when Scott Perry was subpoenaed by the January 6 Committee and given the opportunity to explain his conduct and testify truthfully to what occurred, he not only refused to appear but also allegedly sought a pardon from Donald Trump. (93)

As for what I consider to be true patriotism, I offer the following thoughts about Central Pennsylvania values.

My grandfather on my mother's side, John "Mac" Bonebrake, was not Pennsylvania Dutch *per se* but was raised on a farm in Central Pennsylvania and was the oldest of 13 children. He often would tell me that when the going gets tough and your neighbor's barn burns to the ground, you pitch in and build them a new barn. That was the community spirit and sense of self-reliance that I admired in my grandfather and that was common in this part of Pennsylvania.

It's not surprising, then, that in March 1969, my grandmother, Gladys Bonebrake, started the first meals on wheels program in Mechanicsburg. (94)

It delivered hot meals, free of charge, to those in need, and was a strictly volunteer effort. It was supported by contributions and food donations from area farms and businesses and the kitchen was provided by a church. When my grandmother first promoted meals on wheels, which was a novel idea at the time, she was met with some skepticism, mostly from people who insisted that there was little need for such a program in a solidly middle-class town like Mechanicsburg. They were wrong. Within months my grandmother's meals-on-wheels program was bringing food and hope to over 30 clients and nourishing the body and soul of the whole community. Today the Mechanicsburg Meals on Wheels program is believed to be the second oldest such program in the U.S. and has delivered over 750,000 meals to the elderly and infirmed. (95)

Now, I noted earlier that I once met and admired former President George H.W. Bush. One of his enduring themes was the idea of a "thousand points of light". As he noted in his inaugural address in 1989:

I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the Nation, doing good. ... The old ideas are new again because they are not old, they are timeless: duty, sacrifice, commitment, and a patriotism that finds its expression in taking part and pitching in. (96)

And to illustrate his point, Bush handed out "Points of Light Awards" six days a week to citizens working to aid their communities through volunteer work. (97)

In contrast, Donald Trump appears to have a very different view of volunteerism.

At a rally in Montana in 2018, Trump mocked not only John McCain, who was dying at the time, but also President George H.W. Bush, who had just lost his wife Barbara, noting that:

“A thousand points of light, I never quite got that one. What the hell is that? Has anyone ever figured that one out? It was put out by a Republican, wasn’t it?” (98)

Of course, it is disappointing that Trump would say such a thing, but not surprising, as gratuitous insults are his stock-in-trade. But let me clarify something for the former President.

My grandmother Gladys Bonebrake, who started the Meals-on-wheels program in Mechanicsburg, was a point of light.

She was a true patriot, with the kind of patriotism that, as President Bush said, found expression from taking part and pitching in.

And by contrast, Donald Trump and Scott Perry are neither points of light nor patriots. Their actions to support a violent insurrection on January 6 to overturn the 2020 election were dark moments in American history that should never be forgotten. They betrayed the public trust, eroded public confidence in elections and do not deserve to be returned to office come the election on November 5th.

So for this reason, I today am endorsing Democrat Janelle Stelson for Congress over Republican Scott Perry in Pennsylvania’s 10th Congressional District, and urge all Pennsylvanians in the 10th District to vote for Stelson on November 5th.

***More about MakeModeratesMatter.com and
the moderate movement in America***

Now before I turn to the second main point of my speech today regarding Donald Trump’s endless corruption, I’d like to digress for a moment to say a few more words about my website at MakeModeratesMatter.com.

As I mentioned earlier, I consider myself to be a political moderate, but there is nothing moderate about Donald Trump. There is nothing moderate about lying to your followers about a stolen election; inciting a violent attack on your nation's Capitol; and refusing to tell the rioters to disperse for over three hours while everyone around you is imploring you to do something.

But what to do about this.

It is relatively easy to stand on these steps and implore the good people of Pennsylvania not to vote for Donald Trump and Scott Perry, which itself is important as we approach the November 5th election. But in the longer term, we must ask ourselves what can be done to combat the chaos and extremism that Trump and Perry have brought upon our land.

And with that in mind, I have started building a website at MakeModeratesMatter.com.

Now more than ever, Democracy needs moderates. We not only must preserve an aversion to extremism but also foster a sense of humility in dealing with our neighbors, both traits that I believe political moderates possess. We must work together respectfully with people of different viewpoints and make decisions that are based on proven facts and science, not political rhetoric and conspiracy theories.

And in fact, I am not alone in this view. A Gallop poll in January 2022 found that 37% of Americans identified themselves as moderate, which exceeded the percentage that considered themselves either conservative or liberal. (99)

But despite this, the moderate movement in American seems to have foundered.

In 2010, a political organization “**No Labels**” was formed with the stated mission to support centrism, but they declined to run a candidate in the 2024 presidential election, vowing not to be a “spoiler” for either party. (100)

In July 2022, a similar effort emerged when a group of former Republican and Democratic officials created the “**Forward Party**,” to appeal to what they call

the “moderate, common-sense majority.” (101) But to date, their efforts appear to have gained limited traction. (102)

And a “**Moderate Party**” in New Jersey is trying to restore “fusion voting” in that state. Their goal is to identify and support candidates, whether Republicans or Democrats, who best demonstrate they can work together collegially with people of different viewpoints. (103) To accomplish this, fusion voting would allow a candidate to appear on a ballot multiple times for multiple parties so voters could support a candidate even if they disagree with that candidate's major party affiliation. The practice was legal in New Jersey until 1922, but a lawsuit has been filed to attempt to have it reinstated. The issue now is in the courts and will not be decided before the 2024 elections. (104)

But despite the relative lack of success to date by these centrist groups, I am sympathetic to their cause, and to any other efforts to promote moderation in American politics.

So with that in mind, I am building my website at MakeModeratesMatter.com. It is my hope to create a resource for information about moderates. I will investigate who they are and what they believe. I will explore why we need moderation in politics and how to encourage it. I will follow the progress of the third-party movements and examine other structural initiatives that might also help to promote moderation in American politics, such as ranked choice voting and measures to combat gerrymandering. And all this will be done with two main aims: first, to empower moderation in American politics; and second, to seek common ground for a more productive government.

I know this is easier said than done. And please understand that my website is a work in progress that will take some time to develop. I have advanced degrees in law and public policy analysis but never had a course in website building! Nevertheless, that is my goal.

But let’s return now to the second of my main points for my speech today, which is that:

(2) Donald Trump is unfit to be President of the United States because he was the most corrupt President in U.S. history.

Now unlike my first point, where researching the January 6 attack on the capitol was made easy by the Select Committee's Report, this second point about Trump's corruption is nearly impossible to tackle. The problem, of course, is that there simply is too much information. But while I cannot cover Trump's corruption story in detail, I nevertheless have prepared a "Donald Trump Corruption Timeline" that provides at least some highlights of his malfeasance. So let us begin now our Donald Trump corruption journey.

Donald Trump Corruption Timeline

1970s – 1990s: *Early suspect business dealings.*

From the 1970s through the 1990s, Donald Trump engaged in various real estate ventures, facing numerous lawsuits and accusations of malpractice. His management of the Trump Organization came under scrutiny for alleged deceptive practices and misuse of funds. (105)

April 1991: *Ruling against Trump in Trump Tower class action lawsuit.*

In April 1991, there was a ruling against Trump in a class action lawsuit involving Trump Tower, which is the headquarters for the Trump Organization in New York City. The lawsuit alleged among other things that Trump had paid \$774,000 to a window-cleaning company that employed undocumented Polish immigrants who worked 12-hour shifts and were not told about asbestos in the under-construction structure. (106) Trump agreed to pay a total of nearly \$1.4 million. (107)

July 1991: *First of Trump's six bankruptcies.*

In July 1991, Trump made his first of six bankruptcy filings. Trump's Taj Mahal opened in April 1990 in Atlantic City, but six months later defaulted on interest payments to bondholders and filed for bankruptcy in July 1991. Trump's two other Atlantic City casinos, the Plaza Hotel in New York, and Trump Entertainment Resorts also later declared bankruptcy. (108)

November 2016: *Trump University settles three lawsuits.*

In November 2016, Trump University settled three lawsuits. Trump University offered a real estate training program from 2005 to 2010 and was owned and operated by the Trump Organization. It was accused by the New York Attorney General of using illegal business practices and sued by some of its students who alleged that Trump University defrauded them by using misleading marketing practices and engaging in high pressure sales tactics. After being elected President, Trump settled all three lawsuits in November 2016 for a total of \$25 million. An article in the National Review, a conservative publication, called Trump University a “massive scam.” (109)

January 9, 2017: *Trump appoints his son-in-law Jared Kushner and daughter Ivanka Trump to top White House roles, raising charges of nepotism, ethics abuses and graft.*

In January 2017, Trump appointed his son-in-law Jared Kushner to a top White House job. (110)

Shortly thereafter Trump also employed his daughter Ivanka Trump as a top adviser. (111) Since then, ethical questions about their role in the White House have abounded.

For example, over a span of two months in late 2018, the Chinese government granted 18 trademarks to companies linked to President Trump and his daughter Ivanka, which apparently were “fast tracked” and received other favorable treatment. (112) And in 2019, it was reported that a firm founded by Jared Kushner received over \$90 million in foreign funds channeled through secretive offshore companies. (113)

And perhaps most strikingly, after Trump left office in 2021, Jared Kushner established a new private equity fund which accepted about \$2 billion directly from Saudi Arabia’s sovereign wealth fund. (114)

As former Republican Governor Chris Christie noted of the incident:

The graft from this family is breathtaking. It’s breathtaking. Jared Kushner and Ivanka Kushner walked out of the White House and months

later get \$2 billion from the Saudis? ... You think it's because he's some kind of investing genius? Or do you think it's because he was sitting next to the President of the United States for four years doing favors for the Saudis? That's your money. That's your money he stole and gave it to his family. You know what that makes us? A banana republic. (115)

January 22, 2017: *First of several lawsuits filed against Trump for violating the emoluments clauses; ongoing conflicts of interest.*

In 2017, the first of several lawsuits were filed alleging Trump violated the emoluments clauses of the U.S. Constitution.

The Emoluments Clauses of the U.S. Constitution are designed to prohibit financial conflicts of interest by sitting presidents and other government officials. The objective of these clauses is to make sure that a president's loyalty is not compromised by his or her personal financial interest.

Upon winning the election in 2016, Trump refused to follow the advice of the Director of the Office of Government Ethics to divest from his business holdings while serving as President. Instead, he maintained his business dealings and took steps to keep his financial interests secret, including by refusing to release his tax returns.

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) reported that while the exact number is not known, foreign governments paid Trump millions of dollars through his businesses. More than 150 foreign officials from 77 foreign governments patronized Trump properties and gave Trump other things of value while he was president. (116) CREW also reported that it had documented more than 3,000 instances of conflicts of interest, including more than 2,000 visits to Trump properties by government officials and the hosting of events at Trump hotels. (117)

CREW noted that:

Trump ran as the "law and order" candidate who would "drain the swamp" in Washington, D.C. Instead he did the opposite, using his

power as the President to boost his own profits through frequent visits to his hotels and golf courses, relentless promotion of his properties, and countless other interactions between the Trump Organization and the government. By keeping these properties, Trump provided corporate lobbyists, foreign actors, special interests and anyone else seeking political clout a way to gain access to his administration. Trump opened the presidency up for business, and for four years, influence was for sale.

...

After campaigning on the promise that he wouldn't have time to leave the White House or play golf, President Trump visited his properties 547 times while in office, paying 145 visits to Mar-a-Lago, 328 visits to golf courses, and 33 visits to the Trump hotel in Washington. He often brought other senior government officials along, sending a message to his administration and those who would like to curry favor that his properties are open to their business. (118)

September 29, 2017: First of three Trump cabinet officers resign amid scandal; others are implicated in ethical controversies.

In addition, despite Trump's promise to bring accountability to Washington, his own cabinet was one of the most ethically challenged in U.S. history. (119)

Three of his cabinet officers – Tom Price (120), Scott Pruitt (121), and Ryan Zinke (122) – resigned in the midst of ethics investigations and allegations of improper spending habits and conflicts of interest.

In addition, Trump nominated **Wilbur Ross** for Secretary of Commerce, and it wasn't long before allegations of impropriety emerged. In June 2018, an investigation by Forbes found that Ross, while Secretary of Commerce, owned stakes in companies co-owned by the Chinese government and a shipping firm tied to Vladimir Putin's inner circle, and had failed to divest his financial holdings, contradicting Ross's earlier written statement to the contrary. (123)

Ross and the Trump administration also refused to comply with a congressional subpoena for documents regarding efforts to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census. In June 2019, the House held Ross and Attorney General William Barr in contempt of Congress, and this was only the second time in U.S. history that a sitting Cabinet member was held in contempt. (124)

March 2019: *Mueller Report finds that Trump attempted to obstruct the Russian election interference investigation.*

In 2017, the Senate Intelligence Committee began investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election, including connections to Trump's campaign. The investigation led by Special Counsel Robert Mueller revealed contacts between Trump's campaign and Russian officials.

For example, on July 27, 2016, Trump said during a news conference that: "Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing, I think you will probably be rewarded mightily by our press." In response, on or around that very same day, Russian officials began to target email addresses associated with Hillary Clinton's personal and campaign offices. (125)

In addition, there was a meeting at Trump Tower in June 2016 between three senior members of the Trump campaign – Donald Trump, Jr., Jared Kushner and Paul Manafort – and Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya. Donald Trump Jr. made several misleading statements about the meeting and initially told the press that the meeting was held to discuss adoptions of Russian children by Americans. Later, Trump Jr. admitted that he had agreed to the meeting with the understanding that he would receive information damaging to Hillary Clinton, and that he was conducting opposition research. "I love it," Trump Jr. had replied in an email when told of the meeting. (126)

In early July 2017, it was reported that then-President Donald Trump himself drafted Trump Jr.'s initial misleading statement, and this report was later confirmed by Trump's lawyers, contradicting past denials. (127)

Mueller's final report was submitted to Trump's Attorney General William Barr in March 2019. The report did not find sufficient evidence of a criminal conspiracy between Trump and Russia, but did show that Trump welcomed Russian help. (128)

The Report also detailed 10 instances where Trump attempted to obstruct the investigation. The Report did not recommend indicting Trump for obstruction of justice, but only because a Justice Department guideline prohibited the federal indictment of a sitting president; the Report did not conclude that Trump had not obstructed justice. (129)

Nevertheless, Trump appointed Attorney General Barr released a summary of the report that claimed no wrongdoing by Trump. In turn, a federal judge later found Barr made "misleading public statements" to spin the findings in favor of Trump, and a federal appeals court found Barr wrongly withheld information regarding the findings of the Russia probe. (130)

June 13, 2019: *Kellyanne Conway and other Trump officials alleged to have violated the Hatch Act.*

In June 2019, the Office of Special Counsel, which oversees federal personnel issues, took the unprecedented step of issuing a report calling for the removal of Kellyanne Conway, a highly visible member of the Trump Administration, who was a "repeat offender" in violating the Hatch Act, which forbids executive branch employees from taking part in political activities while engaged in their official duties. It would be up to President Trump to remove Conway for violating the Hatch Act, but Trump did not. (131)

Unfortunately, this was not the only violation of the Hatch Act by Trump advisors that went unpunished. The Office of Special Counsel found at least 13 Trump aides to have violated the Hatch Act by using their official position for partisan politics. (132)

December 10, 2019: *Trump pays \$2 million to charities as fine for foundation abuse.*

In December 2019, Trump agreed to pay \$2 million to charities as a fine after conceding that he used his charitable foundation as a personal piggy bank. According to the New York attorney general, the Trump Foundation was used in part to further Donald Trump's business interests and 2016 presidential run. About \$1.8 million left in the Trump Foundation's bank account was also split among the nonprofits that received the fine money, along with over \$11,000 that Trump paid back for spending foundation money on sports memorabilia and champagne at a charity gala. (133)

December 18, 2019: *Trump impeached for the first time for soliciting foreign influence in 2020 presidential election.*

In December 2019, Trump's first impeachment took place after a formal House inquiry found that Trump withheld military aid for Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky in order to influence him to announce an investigation into Trump's political opponent Joe Biden.

The inquiry discovered among other things a telephone call between Trump and Zelensky on July 25, 2019, and a non-verbatim transcript of the call confirmed that Trump asked Zelensky to investigate Joe Biden and his son Hunter. (134)

Trump for his part tweeted on Christmas Day that “the call with Ukraine was perfect, with no pressure.” (135)

Nevertheless, Bill Taylor, the Trump administration's top diplomat to Ukraine, testified that U.S. military aid to Ukraine was conditioned on Zelensky publicly announcing investigations into the Bidens. (136)

And Gordon Sondland, U.S. Ambassador to the European Union, testified that he worked with Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani to arrange a *quid pro quo* with the Ukraine government. (137)

As a result, in December 2019, the House voted to impeach Trump on counts of soliciting foreign interference in the 2020 U.S. presidential election and then obstructing the inquiry. (138)

After a trial in Senate, however, in February 2020, Trump was acquitted on both counts. (139)

Nevertheless, Republican Senator Mitt Romney became the first senator in history from an impeached president's own party to vote to convict. As Romney noted in his comments before the Senate:

The allegations made in the articles of impeachment are very serious. ... I knew from the outset that being tasked with judging the President, the leader of my own party, would be the most difficult decision I have ever faced. The grave question the constitution tasks senators to answer is whether the President committed an act so extreme and egregious that it rises to the level of a high crime and misdemeanor. Yes, he did. The President asked a foreign government to investigate his political rival. The President withheld vital military funds from that government to press it to do so. The President delayed funds for an American ally at war with Russian invaders. The President's purpose was personal and political. Accordingly, the President is guilty of an appalling abuse of public trust. ... What he did was not "perfect." No, it was a flagrant assault on our electoral rights, our national security, and our fundamental values. Corrupting an election to keep oneself in office is perhaps the most abusive and destructive violation of one's oath of office that I can imagine. ... (140)

January 13, 2021: *Trump impeached for second time for January 6 insurrection.*

In January 2021, as I noted earlier, Trump was impeached for the second time for inciting the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, making him the first President to be impeached twice. (141)

January 20, 2021: *With just hours left in office, Trump pardons 74 people and commutes the sentences of 70 others, including political allies.*

Then on January 20, 2021, with only hours to go before leaving office, Trump pardoned 74 people and commuted the sentences of 70 others. (142)

Trump road into office as a populist and left with an orgy of pardons for politically connected business moguls, real estate barons and disgraced former members of Congress. Family members also were beneficiaries of Trump's pardon power, most notably including Charles Kushner, father of Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner. (143)

The Constitution places almost no limits on presidential commutations and pardons for federal crimes, and past presidents have made controversial pardons as well, but Trump used his power to the extreme. He almost never consulted with the Justice Department's clemency office. In addition, Trump's habit of publicly urging ex-aides not to cooperate with investigations and dangling pardons in exchange for their loyalty led Robert Mueller to consider whether such conduct amounted to obstruction of justice. Mueller did not pursue that point, which is unfortunate, as Trump promptly pardoned his former aides Roger Stone, Paul Manafort, Michael Flynn and George Papadopoulos, all of whom were convicted of lying to or obstructing the Mueller probe. (144)

It also is notable that the commutations Trump made the night he left office include 15 political figures and allies convicted of public corruption crimes. In so doing, Trump removed accountability for these crimes and possibly encouraged the commission of similar acts in the future. The public officials who received clemency included six former U.S. House Representatives, three former federal political appointees, a former California state assemblyman, a former Palm Beach County commissioner, a former Detroit mayor, and a former Illinois governor. (145)

Trump reportedly even considered offering "preemptive pardons" to people who had not yet been charged with crimes, like his attorney Rudy Giuliani and several of his children, and even mused about the possibility of a "self-pardon," although those didn't materialize. (146)

May 3, 2022: *DC Attorney General claws back \$750,000 in misspent funds from Trump Organization and Presidential Inaugural Committee.*

In May 2022, the DC attorney general announced that the Trump Organization and Donald Trump's Presidential Inaugural Committee would be required to pay \$750,000 to resolve allegations that they illegally misused nonprofit funds to enrich the Trump family. (147) The suit alleged among other things that the Inaugural Committee, which was a nonprofit organization, misused charitable funds to dramatically overpay the Trump Hotel for event space, throw a private party for Trump's children, and pay a private debt owed by the Trump Organization. (148)

September 2022: *Trump business failures summarized.*

In September 2022, Public Opinion published a list of over a dozen of Trump's most noteworthy business failures. (149)

The list included Trump Airlines, which defaulted on a loan after two years; and the Trump Travel Site at GoTrump.com, which failed after one year.

Several of Trump's failed businesses had suspect business practices. Trump touted Trump Beverages, for example, as offering "one of the purest natural spring waters bottled in the world," but in fact it was simply bottled by a third party.

Trump's businesses also had a habit of stiffing their small business vendors. Contractors were left unpaid for more than \$2.98 million in repairs at the Trump International Hotel. There was even a small-business owner who Trump stiffed out of \$100,000 worth of pianos. Unpaid bills at the Trump Taj Mahal Casino Resort in Atlantic City amounted to \$90 million, and liens were placed against Trump's Washington, D.C. hotel after \$5 million in contractor bills were left unpaid. (150)

December 2022: *Trump tax returns reveal he paid little or no taxes.*

Despite modern precedent that presidents make their tax returns public, Donald Trump refused to do so for years, falsely claiming that he couldn't do so because they were under audit. (151) Nevertheless, in December 2022 a House committee finally obtained six years of Trump's returns.

The returns showed that in the 2020 tax year, Donald and Melania Trump reported \$78 million in gross income from 16 foreign countries where Trump had properties. In 2017, Trump's first year in office, he also made \$6.5 million from China.

Despite all this, Trump reported zero charitable donations in 2020. (152)

In addition, Donald Trump only paid \$750 in federal income taxes the year he won the presidency, and in his first year in the White House paid another \$750. Trump paid no income taxes at all in 10 of the previous 15 years. (153)

May 9, 2023: *Jury finds Trump liable for sexual abuse in E. Jean Carroll case.*

In May 2023, a jury in Manhattan presided over by Judge Lewis Kaplan found Donald Trump liable for sexually abusing advice columnist E. Jean Carroll in 1996, awarding her \$5 million. (154)

The jury found Trump responsible for sexually abusing Carroll and then defaming her. Initially the verdict appeared to find that Trump was not liable for rape but Judge Kaplan clarified that the jury had found that Trump had raped Carroll according to the common definition of the word. (155)

One day after the verdict, Trump made additional derogatory comments about Carroll during a cable television appearance. Trump asserted that "I never met this woman. I never saw this woman," and that her account, which had just been validated by a jury the day before, was a "fake," "made up story" invented by a "whack job" and that the trial was "rigged." (156)

In May 2023, Carroll amended her original defamation suit to include these additional comments, seeking at least \$10 million in damages. (157)

In January 2024, the jury deliberated for three hours and awarded Carroll \$7.3 million in emotional damages, \$11 million in reputation-related damages, and \$65 million in punitive damages, totaling \$83.3 million. The jury found Trump had committed sexual abuse and forcible touching, two of the three elements of Carroll's battery claim. (158)

As a final aside, it is worth noting that at least 26 women have accused Trump of sexual misconduct since the 1970s. (159)

June 8, 2023: *Trump indicted in Florida classified documents case.*

In June 2023, Trump was indicted for allegedly mishandling classified documents after leaving the presidency. The charges include willful retention of national defense information and obstruction of justice. (160) The National Archives repeatedly demanded the return of documents from Trump's team and retrieved 15 boxes of documents which were found to contain classified information. A grand jury issued a subpoena for any remaining documents in Trump's possession. Trump certified that he was returning all the remaining documents, but the FBI later obtained evidence that he had intentionally moved documents to hide them from his lawyers. The FBI then searched Trump's home at Mar-a-Lago and recovered over 13,000 government documents, over 300 of which were classified, with some relating to national defense secrets covered under the Espionage Act. (161)

In November 2022, the FBI investigation was taken over by Special Counsel Jack Smith.

The Federal judge hearing the Trump classified documents case is Aileen Cannon, who was randomly assigned in the case. She was appointed by Trump in 2020, and many felt this created the appearance of a conflict of interest. Indeed, two of her colleagues, including the district's chief judge, suggested that Cannon decline to oversee the documents case, but she refused. (162)

Judge Cannon promptly took actions that delayed the trial and was accused by various experts of "slow walking" the classified documents case against Trump. (163)

Then in July 2024, Judge Cannon ignored historical precedent and dismissed the case altogether on the grounds that Special Counsel Jack Smith's appointment violates the Appointments Clause of the U.S. Constitution. (164)

Smith appealed this decision and we are awaiting further proceedings. (165)

August 1, 2023: *Trump indicted by the DOJ for his role in the January 6 attack on the Capitol.*

As I noted earlier, in August 2023, a grand jury in D.C. indicted Trump for his conduct involving the January 6 Capitol attack, alleging among other things conspiracy to defraud the United States and conspiring to obstruct an official proceeding. (166)

August 14, 2023: *Trump and others indicated in Georgia for election interference.*

As I also noted earlier, Trump was indicted in Georgia in August 2023 along with 18 other defendants for attempting to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election in that state. Four defendants have plead guilty to some charges, and the case for the remaining defendants is on hold pending oral arguments in December 2024. (167)

February 16, 2024: *Trump ordered to pay \$355 million in civil fraud case.*

In September 2022, New York Attorney General Letitia James announced a lawsuit against Trump, his three oldest children and the Trump Organization for fraud and other forms of misrepresentation, alleging that they engaged in financial fraud by presenting vastly different property values to potential lenders and tax officials, with the values being much higher when presented to lenders to obtain loans as compared to the values presented to tax authorities for tax purposes. (168)

The case was presided over by Judge Arthur Engoron. In October 2023, Trump posted a disparaging post about Judge Engoron's principal law clerk which included a photo of her posing with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer at a public event, suggesting the two had a romantic relationship. Judge Engoron decried personal attacks on members of his court as unacceptable and imposed a gag order to prevent Trump from posting about the Judge's staff. (169)

Trump nevertheless violated the gag order and the judge fined Trump \$5,000 and \$10,000 for two violations that same month. Trump appealed the gag order but it was affirmed by a higher court. (170)

In February 2024, Judge Engoron concluded that the "defendants failed to accept responsibility or to impose internal controls to prevent future recurrences" of having "submitted blatantly false financial data" to "borrow more and at lower rates". Engoron assessed Trump and his companies \$354 million of disgorgement of ill-gotten gains, not including interest. (171)

Trump appealed the judgment, and we are awaiting further proceedings. In the meantime, Trump was required to post a \$175 million bond. (172)

May 30, 2024: *Trump is convicted in NY on 34 felonies in the election interference hush money case.*

In March 2023, Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg charged Trump with 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in a scheme to influence the 2016 election by concealing payments made to the pornographic film actress Stormy Daniels to ensure her silence about an alleged sexual affair with Trump. The indictment was the first of a former President. (173)

The case alleged that Trump, along with his then-lawyer Michael Cohen, orchestrated a scheme to pay Daniels and cover up the payments to avoid political damage. The \$130,000 payment was made by Cohen in the final weeks of the 2016 race in what prosecutors allege was an effort to interfere in the election. When Cohen was reimbursed, the payments were recorded as legal expenses, which prosecutors said was an unlawful attempt to mask the true purpose of the transaction. (174)

Trump did not testify but jurors heard his voice through a secret recording of a conversation with Cohen in which they discussed a \$150,000 hush money deal involving Playboy model Karen McDougal, who has said she had an affair with Trump. (175)

Michael Cohen then testified and provided the most direct link of the hush money arrangement to Trump, recounting a meeting in which a plan to have

Cohen reimbursed in monthly installments for legal services was discussed. (176)

In March 2024, judge Juan Merchan imposed a gag order on Trump to restrict what Trump could say publicly about people involved in the case. Trump then made online posts attacking the judge, the gag order, and the judge's daughter. Merchan found Trump in contempt of court for the tenth time and fined Trump \$1,000 for each of the 10 contempt violations, warning Trump that he could have imposed jail time of up to 30 days and would consider doing so going forward. (177)

In May 2024, the jury issued a unanimous verdict finding Trump guilty on all 34 charges of falsifying business records to cover up the payoff to porn star Stormy Daniels, making him the first former president to become a convicted felon. (178)

Sentencing in the case was scheduled for September 18, but on September 7 Judge Merchan delayed sentencing until November 26, 2024, which unfortunately is after the November 5 Presidential election. (179)

As of July 2024: *At least 11 Trump administration associates have been convicted or plead guilty to crimes; and Trump's "rogues gallery" includes dozens of persons who were indicated or are unindicted co-conspirators.*

Trump's campaign associates and administration officials include a rogues gallery of at least eleven individuals who were convicted of or plead guilty to crimes and dozens of other individuals who either were indicted or are unindicted co-conspirators.

Individuals who were convicted or plead guilty include the following 11 persons:

In October 2017, **George Papadopoulos**, a former Trump campaign adviser, plead guilty to lying to the FBI about his contacts with Russian officials and a Maltese professor who told him the Russians had "dirt" on Hillary Clinton. (180)

In December 2017, **Michael Flynn**, who served as Trump's national security adviser for less than a month in 2017, plead guilty to lying to the FBI about his interactions with Russia's ambassador to the U.S. in the weeks before Trump took office. He then accused the FBI of entrapping him and asked the judge to dismiss the charge. Sentencing was delayed and in November 2020, Donald Trump pardoned Michael Flynn. (181)

In February 2018, **Rick Gates**, the former deputy chairman of Trump's campaign, plead guilty to conspiracy against the United States and lying to investigators. (182)

In August 2018, **Paul Manafort**, Trump's former campaign chairman, was found guilty of tax fraud and bank fraud. A month later, he plead guilty to conspiracy charges related to money laundering, lobbying violations and witness tampering. (183)

In August 2018, **Michael Cohen**, Trump's former personal lawyer and "fixer," plead guilty to crimes including orchestrating the "hush money" payments to Stormy Daniels in the NY election interference case. Cohen also plead guilty in November 2018 to lying to Congress about negotiations concerning a proposed Trump Tower in Moscow, which never materialized. (184)

In June 2020, **George Nader**, an informal Trump adviser on foreign policy, was sentenced to 10 years in prison by a federal judge in Virginia. He plead guilty to possessing child pornography and bringing a boy to the United States for sex. (185)

In November 2019, **Roger Stone**, Trump's longtime friend and adviser, was convicted of lying under oath to lawmakers investigating Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election. Stone was convicted on charges of obstruction of a congressional investigation, making false statements to Congress, and witness tampering. (186) In July 2020, the day before Stone was due to report to prison, Trump commuted his sentence. (187)

No "two tier" system of justice.

Now it's worth noting that upon commuting Stone's sentence, and on other occasions, Trump and his associates have complained that there is a two-tier system of justice that has victimized Trump. The facts suggest, however, that in many cases it is Trump himself who was treated more leniently than others similarly situated in a system that favors the wealthy and powerful. When Trump was a real estate developer and casino owner, for example, he essentially got away with all manner of alleged improprieties thanks to his penchant for hiring crafty lawyers and exhausting prosecutors with delay tactics and countersuits. (188)

In addition, it is important to note that when Trump advisor Roger Stone was convicted, the attorney general at the time was Bill Barr, who was nominated by Trump. And when Paul Manafort and Rick Gates were convicted, and George Papadopoulos plead guilty, the attorney general at the time of all three cases was Jeff Sessions, who also was nominated by Trump. As such, as Representative Ted Lieu of California has noted:

... What these facts show is we don't have a two-tiered system of justice. We have one Department of Justice that goes after criminals regardless of party ideology. All of these folks were convicted under the administrations of ... separate Republican attorney generals. It is not the fault of the FBI that Donald Trump surrounded himself with criminals. Donald Trump brought that upon himself. Thank you to the FBI for exposing the cesspool of corruption of these Trump associates. (189)

But let's return to our list.

In September and October 2023, four defendants in the **Georgia election interference case** against Trump plead guilty: **Scott Hall , Sidney Powell, Kenneth Chesebro and Jenna Ellis.** (190)

Dozens of other Trump associates are indicted or become unindicted co-conspirators.

And apart from the Trump associates who were convicted of or plead guilty to crimes, dozens of others were indicated or are unindicted co-conspirators.

The Federal indictment of Trump in the January 6 case references six unindicted co-conspirators. (191)

The election interference and RCIO case in Georgia includes 15 other individuals in addition to the four who already plead guilty. (192)

The classified documents case against Trump in Florida includes two others besides Trump who were indicted. (193)

In addition, as part of Trump's nationwide effort to undermine the 2020 presidential election, **84 total fake electors across seven states** signed false electrical certificates claiming that Trump won the election in their states. As of July 2024, fake electors from Arizona, Georgia, Michigan and Nevada were charged with crimes, plead guilty or agreed to immunity deals, while the remaining fake electors in New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin do not currently face charges. (194)

And last but not least, in August 2020, **Steve Bannon**, who served as a top advisor to Trump's presidential campaign and later worked as White House chief strategist, was indicted for allegedly defrauding Trump supporters in a campaign to help build the president's signature wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Federal prosecutors alleged that Bannon and three other men conspired to use a non-profit group to make payments to themselves, despite promises that their contributions would be used to build a wall. A trial date was set for May 2021, but shortly before midnight on the final full day of Trump's presidency, Trump pardoned Bannon. Federal pardons only apply to federal offenses, however, and in August 2022 Bannon was indicted on New York state on charges of money laundering, conspiracy and fraud related to the \$25 million "We build the wall" scheme. A trial is scheduled for December 9, 2024. (195)

August 2, 2024: *Credible allegation of bribery involving a \$10 million contribution from Egypt to the Trump campaign.*

Finally, it's important to mention that significant allegations of Trump corruption continue to emerge. As recently as August 2, 2024, the

Washington Post reported a credible allegation of bribery. The paper found that while Trump was in office, federal investigators uncovered evidence that he received \$10 million from the Egyptian government just days before the 2016 election. (196) The criminal statute of limitations has expired, but any alleged bribe could still be pursued as a civil case, and Congress could open an investigation. (197)

Trump’s history of corruption is a “disqualification palooza.”

OK, with that I think I’ll stop, but not because there isn’t more to cover. There surely is, of course, but we only have time to scratch the surface.

But what should we make of all this corruption?

Well, simply put, to coin a phrase used by former Federal prosecutor Glenn Kirschner, operator of the “Justice Matters” YouTube channel, Trump’s criminal resume is a “disqualification palooza.” (198)

Think about it. As you’ve just heard, we’ve got, among other things:

- (1) Trump University (199), the Trump Foundation (200) and Trump Inaugural Committee (199) all having to pay money in settlement of lawsuits alleging misuse of funds;
- (2) a \$355 million civil fraud judgement for presenting vastly different property values to potential lenders and tax officials (202);
- (3) a jury in the E. Jean Carroll case unanimously deciding that Donald Trump is liable for sexual battery and defamation (203);
- (4) another jury in NY in a criminal case unanimously finding Donald Trump guilty of 34 felony crimes in an election interference and hush money trial (204);
- (5) a grand jury in Washington DC indicting Donald Trump for trying to overturn the results of the 2020 Presidential election (205); and
- (6) another grand jury in Florida indicting Trump for unlawfully retaining classified documents, obstructing justice and violating our nation’s espionage laws. (206)

Oh, and need I add that Trump was:

- (7) the first President to be impeached twice (207);
 - (8) had three cabinet officers resign amidst ethical scandals (208),
- and
- (9) appointed his son-in-law to a top White House job, only to have him collect \$2 billion from the Saudi government shortly after Trump left office (209).

We needn't go on. Donald Trump is de facto disqualified from ever holding public office again let alone the highest office in the land.

A growing number of Republicans are rejecting Trump.

And significantly, a growing number of Republicans have reached this same conclusion. (210)

Adam Kinzinger, former Republican congressman from Illinois and a member of the January 6 Select Committee noted:

The bottom line is that he (Trump) is the most corrupt person to ever hold office in the United States of America. I think that goes without saying. (211)

Republican Mayor of Mesa Arizona **John Giles** has said:

I think there's a minimum bar for elected officials in this country having to do with character, commitment to the rule of law and the constitution. And I don't feel like Mr. Trump gets over that low bar. (212)

Geoff Duncan, former Republican Lt. Governor of Georgia has said:

Let me speak directly to the millions of Republicans across the country who are tired of making excuses for Donald Trump's behavior at their churches, in their offices and at their own kitchen tables. Enough is enough. The nightmare has to end and it has to end now. (213)

Mike Pence, Donald Trump's own Vice President, has said:

I cannot in good conscience endorse Donald Trump in this campaign.
(214)

Former Congresswoman **Liz Cheney** has said that:

As a conservative, as someone who believes in and cares about the Constitution, I have thought deeply about this. And because of the danger that Donald Trump poses, not only am I not voting for Donald Trump, but I will be voting for Kamala Harris. (215)

Liz Cheney's father **Dick Cheney**, former U.S. Vice President under George W. Bush, also has announced he will vote for Kamala Harris, noting that:

In our nation's 248-year history, there has never been an individual who is a greater threat to our republic than Donald Trump. ... He tried to steal the last election using lies and violence to keep himself in power after the voters had rejected him. He can never be trusted with power again.
(216)

Here in Pennsylvania, **Matthew Mc Caffrey**, the Republican municipal chair in Upper Merion Township, also has announced his support of Kamala Harris and is encouraging Republicans to vote against Trump. He noted that:

I have been upfront about my intention to try to move the party away from the Trump chaos that has been 'dogging' our Republican candidates up and down the ticket here in Pennsylvania. (217)

And finally, in August 2024, USA Today reported that more than **200 Republicans** had endorsed Kamala Harris for president in an open letter.
(218)

Despite Trump's critics, he has devoured the Republican Party.

But despite the growing chorus to reject Trump, the challenge before us remains great.

As Francis Wilkinson wrote in an opinion piece in an April 2024 issue of the Los Angeles Times:

...

Trump is nothing like a master criminal. But he is a master of something far more sinister and complex: corruption.

Crime is a largely private endeavor. Corruption is public. It seeps into the muscle and sinew of democratic society and institutions; it devours from within. ...

Crime is when you launch a violent attempt to overthrow the republic. Corruption is when you convince an entire political party to pretend they didn't watch it live on television....

Crime is when you make off with top-secret documents. Corruption is when a MAGA judge can't find time to schedule your trial or process the mountainous evidence of your guilt.

...

The Republican Party has been corrupted absolutely. House Republicans have combined McCarthyism with Larry, Moe and Curlyism to twist Congress to comically corrupt ends — all to serve the greater degeneracy of Trump.

...

Trump hasn't just captured the trenches of conservative America, he has taken the commanding heights. ... If he can somehow get through the next few perilous months, he may yet render corruption sacred, and the republic irredeemable. (219)

Ouch. That's a powerful message. And a frightening thought.

Penrose statue challenges us.

But I can't bring myself to end on that note. I'm an optimist by nature and can't leave you fearing that the election on November 5 portends impending doom. So if you'll bear with me, I'd like to share one last story.

The following is part of an opinion piece that I published in the October 15, 1982, issue of the Harrisburg Evening News, several years after I delivered my first speech about corruption on these very steps. The message of my article still rings true, but to understand it fully requires a bit of Pennsylvania history.

Not far from where we are standing right now, down this path to my left, at the corner of Third and Walnut Streets, is a statue of Boies Penrose. Suffice it to say that Penrose was an interesting character. He represented Pennsylvania in the U.S. Senate from 1897 to 1921 and is widely considered to be the fourth political boss of the Pennsylvania Republican political machine. He was an imposing figure who stood 6'4" tall and at one point weighed nearly 350 pounds. (220)

Over the years, Penrose was implicated in one scandal after another, not the least of which was the construction of the Capitol building behind me. When it was dedicated in 1906, it was labeled a "Colossal Temple of Fraud" as the final cost was more than three times the limit of \$4 million that was set by the legislature. Investigations revealed that, among other things, the state paid \$5,500 for a ceiling that should have cost \$550, and \$2,000 for a chandelier that another supplier had offered to provide for \$193. Each day for months on end, reports of fraud shocked the state. In all, it was found that contractors reaped profits ranging from 300 to over 4,000 percent. (221)

No one knows for sure how deeply Penrose was involved in the Pennsylvania Capitol scandal, but it was hard to believe that the boss of the Republican machine had no prior knowledge of such an extensive and fraudulent project. Nevertheless, Penrose remained popular, was never indicted in connection with the affair and emerged relatively unscathed. Indeed, the statue of Penrose at the end of this path was erected in his honor in 1930. (222)

So with that background in mind, it was interesting that in 1980, a proposal emerged to remove the Penrose statue from the Capitol grounds. After all, it was thought, the first thing you see when you visit the Capitol should not be a corrupt political boss.

And that's what prompted my article.

My piece was entitled "Penrose statue challenges us," and it read in part as follows:

Recently, a question of "political aestheticism" provoked comment in Harrisburg. Rep. Mark Cohen, D-Phila., wanted the statue of former Republican boss Boies Penrose removed from its Third and Walnut Streets perch.

"Anybody who knows who he is knows what a crook he was," noted Cohen of Penrose.

In editorial response, the Patriot and Evening News argued: "We say let standing statues stand. It's part of the charm of Capitol Hill and Harrisburg."

The flavor of such a remark, of course, is debatable but its efficacy is not; to remove the Penrose statue for its suggestion of corruption, would be to demolish as well the entire Pennsylvania Capitol building which, following its dedication in 1906, was labeled a "Palatial Monument of Fraud." Certainly the cost suggested by an onslaught of bulldozers and wrecking balls is prohibitive.

One suspects, however, that the issue here addressed is not so much one of monuments and statues as one of knowledge and direction. Most Pennsylvanians take no more notice of Penrose than they do of statuary in any public facility. Perhaps, too, few blinked when Congressman Raymond Lederer of Pa. was re-elected to office while under indictment on Abscam-related charges. Or when Congressman Daniel Flood of Pa., though indicted for perjury, conspiracy and bribery, successfully sought re-election to office and was "vigorously applauded" by a crowd of some 500 supporters who gathered to offer him the Lion's Club "Citizen of the Year" award.

...

Ultimately, however, it is the Pennsylvania electorate which more than legislation will determine the future of this Commonwealth. Ours is a representative government. We fought for it. We won it. But do we have it? From 1960 to 1970, Pennsylvania turnout in presidential

elections fell from 63 percent to 61 percent, and in 1980 voter response was but 53 percent. In contrast, in West Germany, a country with a strikingly low incidence of corruption, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was re-elected in 1980 with nearly 90 percent of all eligible Germans voting.

Boies Penrose should not fall. He stands with hand in pocket (or was it the public till?) as a poignant reminder of much that is at once both disappointing and great about this land. History records that Pennsylvanians on occasion have allowed their public affairs to be conducted in a slovenly and corrupt fashion which would not be tolerated in any field in which they felt personally concerned. Yet that we, as a people, have the democratic tools with which to fight for the improvement of mankind's predicament is a blessing. (223)

Those words were true when I wrote them 42 years ago and remain no less true today.

The Presidential election on November 5 will certainly be one of the most consequential elections in our nation's history. But we, as a people, have the power to make our voices heard. Pennsylvania is a critical swing state, and it's no exaggeration to say that the outcome of the election here could well determine the winner of the election as a whole. The citizens of this Commonwealth therefore have the power to hold Donald Trump accountable for his endless corruption.

I therefore urge every citizen of this great Commonwealth to **vote for Kamla Harris for President on November 5, to reject the abject corruption and cronyism of Donald Trump, and to redeem the great nation and democracy that we all deserve.**

Thank you for considering my views.

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