

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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November 19, 2020

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney:

We respectfully request a hearing on the violence directed at supporters of President Trump on November 14, 2020. These supporters were exercising their First Amendment right to peaceably assemble within the District of Columbia. The failure of the city's leaders to afford basic protections to persons who may hold different political viewpoints from their own appears to be another concerning example of viewpoint discrimination in the District.

On November 14, thousands of supporters of President Trump travelled to the District of Columbia to participate in First Amendment activities.¹ However, they were faced with harassment by left-wing counter-protestors which included violent assaults.² Others were pelted with eggs and unknown liquids.³ Still others endured attacks with fireworks while they were dining.⁴ Reports indicate that Trump supporters were harassed by Antifa counter-protestors culminating in fistfights and a stabbing resulting in critical injuries.⁵ Videos show several incidents of Antifa counter-protestors surrounding and threatening Trump supporters while taking their property.⁶ Reports also indicate that two police officers were assaulted.⁷

¹ Lang, Marissa J., *et. al.*, *After Thousands of Trump supporters rally in D.C., violence erupts when night falls*, WASHINGTON POST, Nov. 15, 2020, available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2020/11/14/million-maga-march-dc-protests/>.

² Sorace, Stephen, *Trump supporters harassed, attacked at MAGA march in DC amid clashes with counter-protestors; arrests made*, FOX NEWS, Nov. 15, 2020, available at <https://www.foxnews.com/us/maga-march-violence-protesters-washington-dc-arrests-video>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*, see also *Clashes Between Protest Groups Break Out After Thousands Rally for Trump in DC*, NBC NEWS 4 WASHINGTON, Nov. 14, 2020 (updated Nov. 15, 2020), available at <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/trump-supporters-protest-in-dc-crowds-gather-at-freedom-plaza/2475292/>.

⁶ Sorace, *supra* at note 2.

⁷ *Id.*

Despite the violence, the mainstream media and liberal establishment were quick to minimize the seriousness of the use of violence against Trump supporters by deriding them for failing to wear masks in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, and asserting that they were infiltrated by “white nationalists, conspiracy theorists, and far right activists...”⁸ City leaders have remained silent on the violence. This growing level of violence directed at others simply for holding different views is unacceptable.

We are especially concerned given a broader pattern of viewpoint discrimination in the District of Columbia. For example, this past summer, the Mayor permitted protestors to spray paint “Defund the Police” on a city street in June where it remained until August,⁹ yet pro-life protestors were arrested for writing messages on a sidewalk in chalk.¹⁰

It is essential that any group exercising their right to peaceably assemble—no matter their viewpoints—be afforded basic protections against violence. It is also essential that the safety of nonparticipants, as well as property within the District, be protected. Although these are basic and fundamental expectations, the city’s leaders have repeatedly failed and/or refused to meet them.

Our Committee must conduct oversight to determine whether the District of Columbia has a plan to ensure that violence is not tolerated against those who come to our nation’s capital in the future to exercise their First Amendment rights. We therefore request that the Committee hold a hearing on this important matter before the end of the 116th Congress. We look forward to working with you to plan and prepare for this requested hearing.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform



Jody Hice
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government Operations

⁸ See Lang, *supra* at note 1. (“After a week in which more than 750,000 Americans were diagnosed with the novel coronavirus, almost none of his backers wore masks. Among their ranks were white nationalists, conspiracy theorists and far-right activists carrying signs demanding action that was already being taken: ‘count the legal votes.’”)

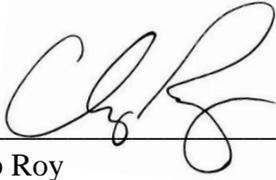
⁹ Frank Miles, ‘Defund the Police’ message in DC mural being repaved, FOX NEWS, Aug. 11, 2020, available at <https://www.foxnews.com/us/defund-the-police-mural-dc-being-repaved>.

¹⁰ Emily Davies, *Two protesters arrested while chalking ‘Black Pre-Born Lives Matter’ on sidewalk*, WASH. POST, Aug 1, 2020, available at <https://republicans-judiciary.house.gov/press-release/house-republicans-demand-answers-on-arrest-of-pro-life-activists-cast-as-unconstitutional-viewpoint-discrimination/>.

Chairwoman Maloney

November 19, 2020

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CR", is positioned above a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Chip Roy

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

cc: The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Chairman
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties