

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

January 12, 2021

Dear Colleague:

The deadly insurrection incited by President Trump last week was an attack on our democracy and one of the darkest days in all American history. The physical and emotional damage done by these domestic terrorists to the U.S. Capitol and all who lived through it was despicable. The loss of life that occurred as a result of this attack, including one Capitol Police officer, was needless and tragic. As we continue to take action to address these events – including action to mitigate and hopefully remove the immediate and ongoing danger President Trump poses to our country – we must remain vigilant against potential threats and future violence in the lead up to the Inauguration. The security failures on January 6th were completely unacceptable. Our caucus will make sure that the events are fully investigated and every necessary security measure is in place for the upcoming Inauguration and the days leading up to it. As you know, there will be an all-Senators briefing on Inauguration security later today with representatives from the Department of Homeland Security, Secret Service and Department of Defense. Very simply: we will do everything in our power to prevent such an attack from ever happening again.

As we continue to reckon with the horrific events on January 6th, our work on behalf of the American people must not and will not be deterred. The nation is facing unprecedented challenges: the greatest economic crisis in seventy-five years, the greatest public health crisis in a century, the climate crisis, and worsening income inequality and racial injustice. The Senate Democratic Majority, working with President-elect Biden and our House Democratic colleagues, is committed to delivering the bold change our country demands, and the help that our people need.

Soon, we will formally welcome three, new outstanding Democratic Senators to our caucus: Jon Ossoff, Raphael Warnock and Alex Padilla. They will join Senators Kelly, Hickenlooper, and Lujan, sworn in last Sunday, as part of a 6-member class of new Democratic Senators in the 117th Congress. I am so proud of the campaigns they ran and thrilled to have them join our extremely talented roster of Democratic Senators.

As you know from our work at the end of the last Congress, the job of COVID emergency relief is far from complete. Democrats wanted to do much more in the last bill and promised to do more, if given the opportunity, to increase direct payments to a total of \$2,000 -- we will get that done. We will also further support vaccine distribution efforts and help American families, small businesses, schools and state and local governments. As soon as the new Senate is organized and Vice-President Harris has been sworn in, we will immediately set to work to deliver on that goal. As our first order of legislative business, please prepare to address additional COVID emergency relief legislation.

There will be much more work for us to do. Working with President-elect Biden and our House Democratic colleagues, the U.S. Senate will finally address the major challenges facing our country that have too long been ignored. We will consider bold legislation to defeat the climate crisis by investing in clean infrastructure and manufacturing, which will create millions of good jobs for Americans, regardless of zip code. We will get to work fixing and significantly improving our health care and child care systems and helping caring economy workers that are working overtime during this crisis. To fix our historic income inequality problem, we will fight to restore workers' rights and fairness in our tax code. To achieve justice for all Americans, we will pursue immigration, democracy, and criminal justice reforms. And that's just the beginning.

When and where we can, we will strive to make this important work bipartisan. The Senate works best when we are working together with our Republican colleagues. However, if our Republican colleagues decide not to partner with us in our efforts to address these issues, we will not let that stop progress.

The Senate must also fulfill its constitutional duty to advise and consent on the President-elect Biden's executive and judicial nominations, particularly his cabinet. The violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6th showed us we need qualified Senate-confirmed people (not in an acting capacity) in key national security positions on Day One, including Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Homeland Security, Secretary of State, Attorney General, and others. The economic challenges our nation faces also require having key economic nominees confirmed and on the job ASAP.

And, of course, in addition to legislation and nominations, the Senate will conduct rigorous oversight on key issues of great importance to the American people. For example, incoming-Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Durbin and I have already announced that the committee, as one of its first acts under Democratic control, will closely examine the rise of violent extremist groups, white supremacists and violent fringe conspiracy theorists who are intent on undermining and overthrowing the government as we saw at the Capitol on January 6th.

Thank you all for your tireless work during these harrowing times. The core tenets of our system of government have been challenged. Violence descended on Capitol Hill, the sacred temple of our Democracy. A once-in-a-century pandemic continues to devastate our nation. The work of the 117th Congress will begin in the wake of a devastating attack, on the heels of a devastating year. Our work to regain the majority in the Senate, however, means that we have an opportunity to work with our House colleagues and a new administration to defeat the virus, provide the relief the American people need, and re-unite the country. I believe our caucus is up to that challenge. We will endeavor—every day—to reward the faith the American people have placed in us.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader